

HELIX EDITION.
The POETS of GREAT BRITAIN
COMPLETE FROM
CHAUCER to CHURCHILL.



CHAUCER VOL. XII.
Aukene quoth hit that I shuld becomen
if you, I wold take of that company
Wit what they be

The House of the Lincey Lib. 465. 20.

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Printed for John Bell British Library Strand May 1st 1783.



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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
GEOFF. CHAUCER.

IN FOURTEEN VOLUMES.

THE MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

From Urry's Edition 1721,

THE CANTERBURY TALES

From Tyrwhitt's Edition 1775.

Grete well CHAUCER whan ye mete----

Of ditees and of songes glade,

The which he----made,

The londe fulfilled is over all.

GOWER.

My maister CHAUCER---chiefe poete of Bretayne----

Whom all this londe schulde of ryght preferre,

Sith of our langage he was the lode-sterre----

That made first to dystyll and rayne

The gold dewe dropys of speche and eloquence

Into our tunge thurgh his excellence.

LYDGATE.

The honour of English tong is dede----

My mayster CHAUCER, floure of eloquence,

Mirroure of fructuous entendement,

Univerſel ſadir in ſcience----

This londis verray treſour and richeſſe----

The firſte ſynder of our fayre langage.

OCCLEVE.

Venerabili CHAUCER, principall poete but pere,

Hevinly trumpet, orlege and regulere,

In eloquence balme, condict and diall,

Myky fountane, clere ſtrand, and rois riall,

Of freſche endite throw Albion iſland braid.

DOUGLAS.

O reverend CHAUCER! roſe of rethouris all,

As in oure tounge flour imperial

That raiſe in Brittain ewer, quha reldis right

Thou beiris of Makers the triumphs royall,

The freſche enamilt termes celeſtiall:

This mater couth haifilluminitt full bricht,

Was thou nocht, of our Inglis all the light,

Surmounting every tounge terreſtriall

As far as Mayi's morrow dois midnight.

DUNBAR.

VOL. XII.

EDINBURG:

AT THE Apoſtlo Preſſ, BY THE MARTINS.

Anno 1782.



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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
GEOFFREY CHAUCER.
VOL. XII.

CONTAINING HIS
MISCELLANEOUS PIECES, *viz.*

ANNELIDA AND ARCITE, COMPL. OF BLACKE KNIGHT, COMPL. OF MARS AND VENUS, LAM. OF M. MAGDALEINE,		FLOURE AND THE LEAFE, COURT OF LOVE, REMEDIE OF LOVE, PROPHECIE,
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Sc. Sc. Sc.

But natheles certain
 I can right now no thrifty Tale sain,
 But CHAUCER, (though he can but lewedly
 On metres and on riming craftily)
 Hath sayd hem in swiche English as he can
 Of olde time, as knoweth many a man;
 And if he have not sayd hem, leve brother,
 In o book, he hath sayd hem in another---
 Who so that wol his large Volume seke. *TALES, ver. 4465.*
 Dan CHAUCER, well of English undefil'd,
 On Fame's eternal bead-roll worthy to be fil'd---
 Old Dan Geoffrey, in whose gentle spright
 The pure well-head of poetry did dwell---
 He whilst he lived was the soveraigne head
 Of shepherds all-----

SPENSER.

Old CHAUCER, like the morning star,
 To us discovers day from far;
 His light those mists and clouds dissolv'd
 Which our dark nation long involv'd;
 But he descending to the shades
 Darkne's again the age invades.

DENHAM.

CHAUCER, him who first with harmony inform'd
 The language of our fathers---His legends blithe
 He sang of love or knighthood, or the wiles
 Of homely life, thro' each estate and age
 The fashions and the follies of the world
 With cunning hand portraying---
 Him who in times-----
 Dark and untaught began with charming verse
 To tame the rudeness of his native land.

AKENSIDE.

EDINBURG:
 AT THE Apollo Press, BY THE MARTINS.
Anno 1782.



ANNI

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MISCELLANIES.

OF QUEENE

ANNELIDA AND FALSE ARCITE.

Arcite a Theban knight forsaketh Queen Annelida, who loved him entirely, and taketh a new lady, whereupon Annelida maketh this great complaint.

O Thou fiers god of Armis, Mars the Rede,
That in thy frostie countrey callid Thrace
Within thy grisly templis full of drede
Honourid art as patrone of that place,
With the Bellona, Pallas full of grace,
Be present, and my song continue' and gie;
At my beginnyng thus to the I crie. 7

For it full depè is sonkin in mynde
With pitous herte in Englishe to endite
This olde storie, in Latine whiche I finde,
Of Quene Annelida and false Arcite,
That elde, whiche all thingis can frete and bite,
And it hath fretin many' a noble storie,
Hath nigh devourid out of our memorie. 14

Be favourable' eke thou Polymnia,
On Parnassus that with thy sustirs glade
By Helicon, and not ferre from Cirrha,

Singist with voice memoriall in the shade,
 Undir the laurir, which that maie not fade,
 And doe that I my ship to havin winne:
 First followe' I Stace, and aftir him Corinne. 21

*Jamque domos patrias, Scythice post aspera gentis
 Prælia, laurigero subeuntem Thesea curru
 Latifici plausus, missusque ad sidera vulgi, &c.*

When Theseus with warris long and grete
 The aspre folke of Scythe hath ovircome,
 The laurir crounid, in his chaire golde bete
 Home to his countre housis is icome,
 For whiche the peple blisfull all and some
 So cridin that to the steris it went,
 And hym to honourin did all ther entent. 28

Before this duke in signe of victorie
 The trompis come, and in his banir large
 The' image of Mars; and in token' of glorie
 Men mightin se of trefure many' a charge,
 Many' a bright helme, and many' a spere and targe,
 Many' a freshe knight, and many' a blisfull rout
 On horse and fote, in all the field about. 35

Hyppolyta his wife, the hardie Quene
 Of Scythia. that he conquerid had,
 With Emelie her youngè sustir shene,
 Faire in a chare of golde he with him lad,
 That al the ground about her chare she sprad
 With brightnesse of the beautie in her face,
 Fulfillid all of largesse and of grace. 42

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With his triumph and laurir corouned thus
In all the floure of Fortun'is yevyng
Lete I this noble prince, this Theseus,
Toward Athenis in his waie ridyng,
And fonde I woll in shortly for to bryng
The flie waie of that I began to write
Of Quene Annelida and false Arcite. 49

Mars, that through his furious course of ire,
The oldè wrathe of Juno to fulfill,
Hath set the peplis hertis bothe on fire
Of Thebes and Grece everich othir to kill
With blodie speris, restid nevir still,
But throng now here now there among 'hem both,
That everiche othir flue, so were thei wroth : 56

For when Amphiorax and Tydeus,
Hippomedon and Parthenope' also
Were dedde, and slain was the proude Capaneus,
And when the wretchid Thebans brethrin two
Were slain, and Kyng Adrastus home ago,
So desolate stode Thebis and so bare
That no wight could remedie of his care. 63

And when that the old Creon gan espie
How that the blode roiall was brought adoun
He helde the cite by his tyrannie,
And did the gentils of that regioun
To ben his frendis and dwell in the toun ;
So what for love of him, and what for awe
The noble folke were to the toun idrawe. 70

Emong all these Annelida the Quene
Of Ermonie was in that toun dwellyng,
That fairir ferre was than the sonnè shene;
'Throughout the worlde so gan her name to spryng,
'That her to se had every wight likyng,
For as of trouthe ne is there none her liche
Of all the women in this worldè riche. 77

Yong was this quene, of twentie yeris olde,
Of middle stature, and of soche fairenesse
That Nature had a joye her to beholde;
And for to spekin of her stedfastnesse,
She passid hath Penelope' and Lucreesse;
And, shortlie, if she shall ben comprehended,
In her there mightin nothyng ben amended. 84

This Theban knight Arcite eke, sothe to saine,
Was yong, and therwithal a lustie knight,
But he was double' in love and nothing plaine,
And subtil in that crafte ovre' any wight,
And with his connyng wan this ladie bright,
For so ferforthe he gan her trouth assure
That she hym trustith o'er any cature. 91

What should I saine? she lovith Arcite so
That when that he was absent any throwe
Anone her thought her hertè brast a two,
For in her sight to her he bare hym lowe,
So that she wende have all his herte iknowe;
But he was false, it n'as but fainid chere,
As nedith not soche craftis men to lere. 98

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But nerthèlesse full mikill businesse
 Had he er that he might his ladie winne,
 And swore that he would dyin for distresse,
 Or from his witte he sayid he would twinne;
 Alas the while ! for it was routhe and sinne
 That she upon his sorowis would rue;
 But *Nothing thinketh the false as doth the true.* 105

Her fredome found Arcite in soche manere
 That al was his that she hath, moche or lite,
 Ne to no manir creture made she chere
 Furthir then as it likid to Arcite;
 Ther was no lack with which he might her wite;
 She was so ferforthe yevin him to plese
 That all that likid hym did her to ese. 112

There n'as to her no manir lettir sent,
 That touchid love, from any manir wight,
 That she ne shewid hym or it was brent,
 So plain she was, and dyd her fullè might
 That she n'ill hidin nothyng from her knight,
 Lest he of any untrouthe her upbreide;
 Withoutin bode his hertè she obeide. 119

And eke he made hym jelous ovir her,
 That what that any man had to her saied
 Anon he would yprayin her to swere
 What was that worde, or make him ill apaied;
 Then wenid she out of her witte have braied:
 But all was nought but sleight and flattirie;
 Withoutin love he sainid jelousie. 126

And all this toke she so debonairly
 That al his wil her thought it skilful thyng,
 And er the lengir loved hym tendirly,
 And did hym honour as he were a kyng;
 Her herte was to hym weddid with a ryng,
 For so ferforthe on trouthe is her entent
 That where he goith her hert with him went. 133

Whan she shal ete on him is so her thought
 That wel unnethis of mete toke she kepe,
 And whan that she was to her rest ybrought
 On him she thought alway tyl that she slepe,
 Whan he was absent prively dothe she wepe:
 Thus livith faire Annelida the Quene
 For false Arcyte, that dyd her al this tene. 140

This false Arcyte, of his newfanglenesse,
 For she to him so lowly was and trewe,
 Ytoke lesse deintè for her stedfastneste,
 And sawe anothir lady proude and newe,
 And right anon he clad him in her hewe,
 Wote I not whethir in white, red, or grene,
 And falsid faire Annelida the Quene. 147

But nerthèlesse, grete wondir was it none
 Though he were false, for it' is the kinde of man
 Sithe Lamech was, that is so longe agoone,
 To be in love as false as er he can;
 He was the firstè fathir that began
 To lovin two, and was in bigamie,
 And he founde tentis first but yf men lye. 154

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This false Arcite somewhat must he nede faine
 Whan he was false to coveren his traitourie,
 Right as an horse that can both bite and plaine,
 For he bare her in honde of trechirie,
 And swore he coude her doubleness espye,
 And al was falsenesse that she to him ment;
 Thus swore this these, and forth his way he went. 161

Alas! what hertè might endurin it
 For routhe or wo her sorowe for to tel,
 Or what man hath the conning or the wit,
 Or what man might within the chambre dwel,
 If I to him reherfin shall the hel
 That suffrith faire Annelida the Quene,
 For false Arcite, that did her al this tene? 168

She wepith, wailith, fwounith, pitoussly;
 To grounde as ded she fallith as a stonc;
 She crampisith her limmis crokidly;
 She spekith as her witte were al agone;
 Othir colour than ashin hath she none,
 Ne none othir worde speketh she moch or lite
 But *Mercy, cruil hertè min, Arcite!* 175

And thus endureth til that she was so mate
 That she ne' hath fote on which she may sustene,
 But forth languishing er in this estate,
 Of which Arcite hath neithir rothe ne tene;
 His herte was ellifwhere sette new and grene,
 That on her wo ne deineth him not to think;
 Him reckith ner whethir she flete or sinke. 182

This newè lady holdith him so narowe
 Up by the bridil at the stav'is ende,
 That every worde he dred it as an arowe;
 Her daungir made him bothè bowe and bende,
 And as her luste madin him turne or wende,
 For she ne grauntid him in her living
 No grace why that he hath thereof to finge, 189

But drove him forth; unneth list her to knowe
 That he was servaunt to her ladyship,
 But lestè that he were proude she held him lowe;
 Thus servith he withoutin mete or sip;
 She sente him nowe to lande and nowe to ship,
 And for she yave him daungir al his fil
 Therfore she had him at her ownè wil. 196

Ensample' of this, ye thriftie women al,
 Take hede of Annelida' and false Arcite,
 That for her list him her dere hertè call,
 And was so meke, therefore he loved her lite;
 The kinde of mann'is herte is to delite
 On thing that straunge is, al so God me save,
 For what they may not get that wold they have. 203

Nowe turne we to Annelida ayen,
 That pinith day by day in languishing;
 But whan she sawe that her ne gate no geyn,
 Upon a day ful foro'wfully weping
 She cast her for to make a complaining,
 And with her ownè hande she gan it write,
 And sente it to her Theban knight Arcyte. 210

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The Complaint of Annelida to false Arcite.

So thirlid with the point of remembraunce
 The swerde of sorowe, whette with false plesanncē,
 Myne hertē bare of blisse and black of hewe,
 That turnid is to quaking all my daunce,
 My fewertyē in wapid countinace,
 Sens it availith nothing to ben trewe,
 For who so trewe is certes it shall her rewe
 That servith Love, and dothe her observaunce
 Alway to one, and chaungith for no newe. 219

I wote my selfe as well as any wight,
 For I loved one with al min hert and might,
 More than my self an hundred thousande sith,
 And callid him my hert'is lyfe, my knight,
 And was al his as ferre as it was right,
 And whan that he was glad than was I blithe,
 And his disese ywas my dethe as swithe,
 And he ayen his trouthe hath to me plight
 For evirmore his lady me to kithe. 228

Nowe is he false, alas! and causēles,
 And of my wo he is so routhēles
 That with a worde him list not onis daine
 To bring ayen my sorowful herte in pees,
 For he is caught up in an othir lees;
 Right as hym lyst he laughith at my paine,
 And I ne can min hertē not restraine
 For to love him yet alway nertheles,
 And of all this I n'ot to whom to plaine. 237

And shulde I plain, alas the hardè stounde!
 Unto my foe that yave myn herte a wounde,
 And yet desirith that myn harme be more?
 Now certis ferthir woll I nevir founde
 None othir helpe my foris for to founde,
 My Destiny hath shapid so ful yore,
 I woll none othir medècyne ne lore,
 I woll ben aye there I was onis bounde,
 That I have said be said for evirmore.

246

Alas! where is become your gentillnesse,
 Your wordes full of plesaunce and humblenesse,
 Your observaunce in so lowe a manere,
 Your awaitinge, and eke your besinesse,
 On me, that ye tho callid your maistresse,
 Your soveraine lady in this worlde here?
 Alas! is there now neithir worde ne chere
 Ye vouchsafin upon myn hevinesse?
 Alas! your love I bye it al to dere!

255

Nowe certis, swete Arcitè! though that ye
 Thus causelesse the rufull cause ybe
 Of all my pyne and dedly' adversite,
 Your manly reason ought it to respite
 To fle your sothefast frende, and namely me,
 Which that have nevir yet in no degre
 Offendid you in ought, as wisly he
 That all thinges wote of wo my foulè quite.

265

But for I was so plain to the Arcite
 In all my wordes and workis moche and lite,

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And was so besy aye you to delite,
Myne honour only save, meke, kinde, and fre,
Therefore, Arcite, ye put in me this wite:
Alas! alas! ye rechin not a mite
Though that the percing swerde of sorow byte
My woful hert thorough your cruilte.

271

My swetè foe! why do ye so for shame?
And thinkin ye that furthered be your name
To lovin a newe and ben untrewè aye,
And putin you in flaundir nowe and blame,
And do to me adverfyte and grame
That love you most, God thou wotist alwaye?
Yet turne ayen, and yet be plaine some daye,
And then shall this that now is mis ben game,
And al forgevin whilis I lyve maye.

280

Lo, hertè myne! al this is for to saine,
As whethir shal I praye or ellis plaine?
Which is the way to done you to be trewe?
For eithir mote I have you in my chaine
Or with the deth ye mote depart us twayne,
There beth none othir mene ne wayis newe,
For God so wyfely on my souiè rewe
As verily ye flaine me with the paine,
That mowe ye se unfainid on mine hewe.

289

For thus ferforth have I my deth yfought,
My selfe I murdir with my privie thought;
For sorowe' and routhe of your unkindènèsse

B ij

I wepe, I waile, I fast; al helpith naught;
 I voide alle joy that is to speak of aught,
 I voide alle company, I flye gladnesse:
 Who may avaunt her bet of hevinesse
 Than I? and to this plite have ye me brought
 Withoutin gylte; me nedith no witnesse. 298

And shoulde I pray and weivin womanhede?
 Nay, rathir derh than do so foule a dede;
 And aske mercy and gyltlesse? what nede?
 And if that I complaine what life I lede
 You reckith not, that know I out of drede;
 And if I unto you mine othis bede
 For mine excuse, a scorne shal be my mede;
 Your chere yflourith but it woll not fede;
 Ful longe agon I might have takin hede: 307

For though I had you to morowe againe
 I might as wel holde Aprilis from raine
 As holdin you to makin you stedfast:
 Almyghty God! of trouthe the sovèraine,
 Wher is the trouthe of man? who hath it flaine?
 She that 'hem lovith shall 'hem finde as fast
 As in a tempest is a rottin mast.
 Is that a tame best that is evir faine
 To renne away when he is lest agast? 316

Nowe mercy, swete Arcite! if I missay;
 Whethir have I aught said out of the way
 I n'ot; my witte is wastid al away:
 I fare as doth the songe of chantepleure,

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For nowe I plaine and nowe agen I pley;
I am so masid that I dey, I dey;
Arcite, Arcite, hath born away the key
Of al my wele and my gode avinture :

324

For in this world there ne is no creture
Walking, alas! in more discomfiture
Than I, ne that more sorowe doth endure,
For yf I slepe a furlonge way or twey
Than thinkith me anon that your figure
Suppliant before me stante clad in asure,
Redy este to profre a newe assure

For to ben trewe, and mercy me to prey.

332

The longè night this wondir fyght I drie,
That on the day for soche affray I dye;
And of al this right naught iwys ye retche;
Ne nevirmore myne eyin two ben drye;
And to your routhe and to your trouthe I crye,
But wel away! to ferre ben they to fetche:
Thus holdith me my Destiny a wretche;
But me to rede out of this drede or gye
Ne may my wit (so weke is it) not stretche.

341

Than ende I thus, sithe I may do no more,
I yeve it up for nowe and evirmore,
For I shall nevir este putten in balaunce
My fikirness, ne lerne of love the lore,
But as the swan, I have herde say ful yore,
Ayenst his deth wol sing in his penance,
So singe I here the destinie and chaunce

Howe that Arcite Annelida so fore
Hath thrillid with the poynt of remembraunce. 350

Whan that Annelida, this woful Quene,
Hath of her hande ywrittin in this wise,
With face all ded, betwixin pale and grene,
She fel a swoone, and sithe she gan to rise,
And unto Mars avowith sacrifice
Within the temple, with a forcowfull chere,
That shapin was as ye may plainly here. 357

Explicit.

THE COMPLAINT

OF THE BLACKE KNIGHT.

*The heavy Complaint of a knight for that he can not win
his lady's grace.*

IN Maie, when Flora the freshe lustie quene
The soile hath cladde in grene, and red, and whight,
And Phœbus gan to shede his stremis shene
Anidde the Bulle with al the bemis bright,
And Lucifer to chace awaie the night,
Ayen the morowe our orizont hath take
To bid all lovirs out of slepe awake, 7

And hertis hevie for to recomforte
From drierid of hevie night'is sorowe,
Nature bad 'hem rise, and 'hem disporte
Ayen' the godelie and the glad greie morowe,
And Hope also, with Sainct Ihon to borowe,
Bad in despite of daungir and dispaire
For to takin the wholsome lustie aire; 14

And with a sigh I gan for to abreide
 Out of my slombre', and sodainly up sterter,
 As be (alas) that nigh for sorowe deide,
 My sikènessie fate aye so nie my herte,
 But for to findin soccour of my smerte,
 Or at the lest some relese of my paine,
 That me so fore yhalte in every veine. 21

I rose anone, and thought I wouldè gone
 Into the wodde to here the birdisfying
 When that the mistie vapour was agone,
 And cleare and faire ywas the morownyng,
 The dewe also like silvir in shynyng
 Upon the levis, as any baume swete,
 Till sirie Titan with his persaunt hete 28

Had dryid up the lustie licour newe
 Upon the herbis in the grenè mede,
 And that the floures of many divers hewe
 Upon ther stalkis gonin for to sprede,
 And for to splaie out ther levis in brede
 Again the sonne, golde burnid in his spere,
 That doune to 'hem ycast his bemis clere. 35

And by a rivir forthe I gan costie
 Of watir clere as birell or cristall,
 Till at the last I founde a little weie
 Toward a parke, enclosid with a wall,
 In compace rounde, and by a gatè small;
 Who so that would he frelie mightin gone
 Into this parke, ywallid with grene stone : 42

And in I went to here the birdis song,
Which on the braunchis both in plain and vale
So loude yfang that all the wode yrong
Like as it should shivir in pecis smale,
And as methoughtin that the nightingale
With so great might her voice began out wrest
Right as her harte for love would all to breff. 49

The foile was plain and smoth, and wondir soft,
All oversprad with tapettes that Nature
Had made her self, covirid eke aloft
With bowis grene, the flouris for to cure,
That in ther beautie thei maie long endure
From all assaute of Phœbus fervent fere,
Whiche in his sphere so hotte yshone and clere. 56

The aire attempre, and the smothè winde
Of Zephyrus emong the blofomes white
So wholfome was and nourishing by kinde,
That smale buddis and round blofomis lite
In maner gan of her brethe to delite,
To yeve us hope that there frui& shall ytake
Ayenist autumpne redy for to shake. 63

I sawe the Daphne closid undir rinde,
With the grene laurir and the wholfome pine,
The Mirre also, that wepith ever' of kinde,
The cedris hie, as upright as a line,
The filbert eke, that lowe doith encline
Her bowis grene unto the yerth adoun
Unto her knight callid Demophoon. 70

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There sawe I growing eke the freshe hauthorne
 In white motley, that so sote doeth ysmell,
 Ashe, firre, and oke, with many a yong acorn,
 And many a tre mo then I can tell,
 And me beforne I sawe a little well,
 That had his course, as I could wele beholde,
 Undir an hill, with quicke streamis and colde, 77

The gravill gold, the watir pure as glasse,
 The bankis rounde the well in vironing,
 And soft as velvet was the yongè grasse
 That thereupon lustilie came springyng,
 The sute of trees aboutin compassyng
 Ther shadowe cast, closyng the well arounde,
 And all the herbis growyng on the grounde. 84

The water was so wholesome and so vertuous,
 Through might of herbis growyng it beside,
 Not like to the welle where as Narcissus
 Islain was through the vengeance of Cupide,
 Where so wendir covertly he did hide
 The grain of deth upon eche fatal brinke
 That deth mote folowe who that ever drinke; 91

Ne like unto the pitte of the Pegace
 Undir Parnassus, where poëtis slept,
 Nor like to the welle of pure chastitè
 Which that Diana with her nymphis kept,
 When she nakid into the watir lepte,
 That slowe Actæon with her handis fell,
 Only for he came so nigh the well: 98

But this welle which that I now here reherſe
 So wholfome was that it wouldin aſwage
 Wightes bollin hertis, and the venim perce
 Of Penſifched, withall the cruill rage,
 And ovir more refreſhin the viſage
 Of them that were in any werineſſe
 Of grete labour, or fallin in diſtreſſe. 105

And I that had through daungir and diſdain
 So drie a thurſt, thought that I would aſſaie
 To taſſin a draught of this welle or twain,
 My bittir langour if it might alaie,
 And on the banke anone me doune I laie,
 And with mine hed unto the welle I raught,
 And of the watir dranke I a gode draught, 112

Whereof me thought I was refreſhid wele
 Of the brennyng that fate ſo nigh my herte,
 That verily anone I gan to fele
 An hugè parte releſid of my ſmerte,
 And therewithall anone up I aſterte,
 And thought that I would walkin and ſe more
 Forthe in the parke and in the holtis hore. 119

And thorough a launde as I yede apace,
 And gan aboutin faſt for to beholde,
 I founde anone a delectable place
 That was beſet with treis young and olde,
 Whoſe namis here for me ſhall not be tolde,
 Amidde of whiche there ſlode an herbir grene
 That benchid was with colours new and clene. 126

This herbir was all full of flouris gende,
 Into the whiche as I beholde began,
 Betwixt an hulfere and a wodè bende,
 As I was ware, I sawe where laie a man
 In blacke, and of white colour pale and wan,
 And wondir dedly also of his hewe,
 Of hurtis grene and freshe woundis newe, 133

And ovirmore distrainid with sicknesse
 Beside all this he was full grevouslie,
 For upon hym he had an hote acceffe
 That daie by daie hym shoke full pitouffie,
 So that for constraint of his maladie
 And hertely wo, thus lying all alone,
 It was a deth for one to here hym grone. 140

Whereof astained, my fote I gan withdrawe,
 Full gretly wondiring what it might be
 That he so laye and haddin no felawe,
 Ne that I coude no wight with him yfe,
 Wherof I had grete routhe and eke pite,
 And gan anone, so softely as I coude,
 Amonge the bushis prively me to shroude, 147

If that I myght in any wise aspie
 What was the cause of this his dedly wo,
 Or why that he so petously gan crie
 On his fortune, and on his ure also;
 With al my myght I layid an ere to
 Every worde, to marke wel what he saide
 Out of his swough anon as he abraide. 154

But first, if I shulde makin mencion
 Of his persone, and plainly him discrive,
 He was in sothe, without excepcion,
 To speke of manhode, one the best on live,
 There may no man ayen the trowth ystrive,
 For of his time and of his age also
 He provid was there men shuld have ado. 161

One of the best therto of brede and length,
 So wel ymade by gode proporcion,
 If he had be in his delivir strength,
 But thought and sicknesse were occasyon
 That he thus lay in lamentacyon
 Grouffe on the grounde, in place so desolate,
 Sole by him self, awhapid and amate. 168

And for me semith that it is fitting
 His wordis al to put in remembraunce,
 To me that herdin all his complaining,
 And al the grounde of this his woful chaunce,
 If there withall I maye you do plesaunce,
 I wol to you so as I can anone,
 Lyke as he faide, reherce everichone. 175

But who shal helpin nie nowe to complaine,
 Or who shal nowe my stilè gie or lede?
 O Niobe! let nowe thy teris rayne
 Into my penne, and helpe me eke in nede
 Thou woful Myre! that felist mine hert blede
 Of pitous sorowe, and myn hande eke quake,
 Whan that I writin for this mann'is sake; 181

For unto wo accordith complaining,
 And doleful chere unto hevynesse,
 To sorowe also sighing and weping,
 And pitous mourning unto drerynesse:
 And whoſo that ſhall writin of diſtreſſe
 In party nedith to knowe felingly
 The cauſe and rote of al ſoche malady.

189

But I, alas! that am of witte but dul,
 And that have no knowing of ſoche matere,
 For to diſcrive and writin at the ful
 The woſul Complainte which that ye ſhal here,
 But evin like as doth a ſkrivinere,
 That can no more tell what that he ſhal write
 But as his maiſtir beſide dothe endite;

196

Ryght ſo fare I, that of no ſentement
 Can ſayin right naught in concluſioun,
 But as I herde whan that I was preſent
 This man complainin with a pitous ſoun,
 For even like without addicioun
 Or diſcreſe eythir of more or leſſe
 For to reherſe anon I wol me dreſſe.

203

And if that any nowe be in this place
 That felith in love breninge or ſervence,
 Or hindrid were to his ladie's grace
 With falſe tongis, that with peſſilence
 Sle trewe men, that nevir did offence
 In worde nor dede, ne yet in ther entent,
 If any ſoche there be here nowe preſent

210

Let him of routhe lay him to audience
 With doleful chere and sobre countinaunce,
 To herin this man by ful hie sentence
 Hys mortal wo and his dire perturbaunce
 Complaining, and nowe lying in a traunce
 With lokis upcast and with ruful chere,
 Th' effecte of which was as ye now shal here. 217

The thought oppressed with inward sighis fore,
 The painful lyfe, the body languishing,
 The woful gost, the hertè rent and tore,
 The pitous chere, all pale in complaining
 The dedly face, like ashis in shining,
 The false teris that from min eyin fall,
 Percel declare grounde of my painis al. 214

Whose herte is grounde to blede in hevynesse
 The thought receite of wo and of complainte,
 The brest is chest of dole and drerynesse,
 The body eke so feble and so fainte,
 With hote and colde mine axis is so mainte,
 That nowe I chivir for defaute of hete,
 And hote as glede nowe sodainly I swete; 231

Nowe hote as fire, nowe cold as ashis ded,
 Now hote for colde, now cold for hete again,
 Now cold as yse, and now as colis red
 For hete I brenne; and thus betwixin twaine
 I possid am and al forcaste in paine,
 So that my hete full plainly as I fele
 Of grevous colde is cause every dele. 233

This is the colde of inward hie disdaine,
 Colde of despite, and colde of cruil hate,
 This is the colde that doth his besy payne
 Ayenist trouthe to fight and to debate,
 This is the colde that doth the fyre abate
 Of trewe mening; alas the hardè while!
 This is the toldè that wol me begile: 245

For er the bettir that in trouth I mente
 With al my nyght her fathfully to serve,
 With hert and al to be right diligent,
 The lessè thanke, alas! I can deserve;
 Thus for my trouthè Daungir doth me serve,
 For one that shuld my deth of mercy let
 Hath made Despite anew his swerde to whet 252

Against me, and his arowis to fyle,
 To take vengeance of wilful cruilte,
 And tongis false thorough ther sleightly wyle
 Han gone a werre, that wil not stintid be,
 And false Envie, with Wrathe and Envÿte,
 Have conspirid against al right and lawe
 Of ther malyce that Trough shal be yllawe. 259

And Malèbouche gan first the talè tel,
 To sclaudir Trough of indignacion,
 And False Reporte so laud yrange the bel
 That Misbylese and False Suspicion
 Have Trouthe ybrought to his dampnacion,
 So that, alas! wrongfully he dyith,
 And Falsenesse nowè his place occupyith, 266

And entirid is into Trouth's londe,
 And hath thereof the ful possession.
 O rightful God! that first the trouthe fonde,
 Howe maie thou suffire soche oppressyon,
 That Falshed shulde have jurisdiction
 In Troth's right to sle him giltles!
 In his fraunchise he may not live in pees.

273

Falsly accused, and of his sone forjuged,
 Withoutin answer, while he was absent,
 He damnid was, and maie not be excused,
 For Cruelte yfate in judgèment
 Of Hastinesse without advisèment,
 And badde Dissdaine do execute anone
 His judgèment in presence of his sone.

280

Attourney there maye none admittid ben
 To excuse Trouthè, ne a worde to speke;
 To saith or othe the judge ne lyst not sene;
 There ne is no gaine but he will be wreke.
 O Lorde of Trouthe! to the I cal and clepe,
 Howe may thou sein thus in thy presence
 Withoutin mercy murdrid Innocence!

287

Nowe God, that art of trouthe soveraine,
 And seist how I lie for trouthe bounde,
 So sore yknitte in lov's fyrie chaine,
 Even at the deth, through gyrt with many'a wounde,
 That lykily are never for to sounde,
 And for my trouthe am dampnid to the deth,
 And not abyde, but drawe along the breth,

294

Confidre' and se in thine eternal right
 Howe that min herte professid whilom was
 For to be trewe with al my ful myght
 Only to one, the whiche nowe, alas!
 Of volunte without any trespas
 Myne accusours hath takin unto grace,
 And cherisith 'hem my deth to purchace. 301

What menith this? what is this wondir ure
 Of purveiaunce, yf so I shal it cal,
 Of god of Love, that false 'hem so assure,
 And trewe, alas! downe of the whele ben fal!
 And yet in sothe this is the worst of al,
 That falsshed wrongfully' of troth hath the name,
 And trouth ayenward of falsshed the blame. 308

This blindè chaunce, this stormy avinture,
 In love hath mostely his experience,
 For who that doth with trouthe most his cure
 Shal for his mede yfindin moste offence
 That servith Love with al his diligence,
 For who can fainin undir lowlyhede
 Ne failith not to findin grace and spede: 315

For I lovid one ful longe sythe agone
 With all mine herte, and body, and ful might,
 And to be ded my hertè can not gone
 From his behestè, but hold that he hath hyght;
 Though I be banishid out of her syght,
 And by her mouth dampnid that I shall dey,
 To my behestè yet I will er obey: 324

For evir fithins that the worlde began,
 Who so lyfte lokin and in flory rede,
 He shal aye findin that the trewè man
 Was put abacke there where as the falskede
 Yfurthered was; for Love takith none hede
 'To fle the trew, and hath of 'hem no charge,
 Where as the false gothe frely at ther large. 329

I take recorde of true Palamedes,
 The gillefs man, the noble worthy knight,
 That evir lovid and had no reles,
 Notwithstanding his manhode and his might,
 Yet Love unto him dyd ful gret unright,
 For aye the bet he dyd in chivalrye
 The more he still was hindrid by envye; 336

And aye the bett he did in every place,
 Thorough his knighthode and his busy paine,
 The ferdir was he from his ladye's grace,
 For to her mercy might he ner attaine,
 And to his deth he coude it not refraine
 For no daungere, but aye obey and serve
 As he beste coude, plainly tyl that he sterve. 343

What was the syne also of Hercules
 For al his conquest and his worthineffe,
 'That was of manly strength alone pceles?
 For lyke as bokis of him liste expresse
 He set pillers thorough his hye prowesse
 Away at Gades, for to fygnyfic
 'That no man might him passe in chivalrye; 350

The whichè pilliris ferre beyonde Inde
 Befet of golde for a remembraunce,
 And for al that yet was he set behinde
 With 'hem that love lyste feibly to avaunce;
 For him, alas! fet last upon a daunce
 Against whom there helpè may no strife,
 And so for al his trowth he losse his life. 357

Phœbus also, for all his plefaunt lyght,
 Whan that he wouid here in yerthe belowe,
 Unto the verry herte with Venus sight
 Ywoundid was thorough Cupidis bowe,
 And yet his lady lyst him not to knowe;
 Though for the love of her his herte dyd blede
 She let him go, and toke of him no hede. 364

What shal I sayin of yonge Pyramus,
 Of trewe Tristram, for al his hye renowne,
 Of Achilles or of Antonius,
 Of Arcytè, or of him Palomowne?
 What was the ende of all ther passiwne
 But astir sorowe deth and than ther grave?
 Lo, here the guerdon that these lovirs have! 371

But falsè Jason with his doublenesse,
 That was untrewè at Colchos to Medec,
 And Theseus, rote of unkindenesse,
 And with these two also the falsè Ence,
 Lo! thus the falsè evir in one degre
 Haddin in love ther lust and al ther wil,
 And save falshode there was none othir skil. 378

Of Thebis city eke the false Arcite,
 And falsir Demophon eke for his slouth,
 They had ther lust and al that myght delite
 For al ther falshode and ther gret untrouthe:
 Thus evir Love, alas! and that is routhe,
 His false liegis forthirith what he may,
 And fleeth the trewe ungodely day by day: 385

For trewe Adonis was slayne with the bore
 Amidde the forest in the grenè shade,
 For Venus love he feltin al the fore,
 But Vulcanus with her no mercy made,
 The foulè chorde had many nightis glade,
 Where Mars Armipotent, her knight and man,
 To fyndin mercy comforte none he can. 392

Also the yongè freshe Hippomenes,
 So lustly fre he was of his corage
 That for to serve with al his hert he ches
 Atalanta, so faire of her visage,
 But Love, alas! quite him so ill his wage,
 With cruil daungir plainly at the laste,
 That with the dethè guerdonlesse he paste. 399

Lo here, alas! the fine of Love's service!
 Lo howe that Love can his servauntis quite!
 Lo how he can his faithful men dispise,
 To sle the trewe men and false to respite!
 Lo howe he dothe the swerde of sorowe byte
 In hert'is foche as moste his luste obey,
 To save the false and do the trewe to dey! 406

For faith, nor othe, nor worde, ne assuraunce,
Trewé mening, nor awaite, nor busynesse,
Neithir stil porte ne faithful attendaunce,
Manhode, ne might in armis, worthinesse,
Nor pursute of worship nor hie prowesse,
Nor in straunge landis riding ne travaile,
Ful lytil or nought in love dothe availe. 413

Peril of dethe neithir in se ne lande,
Hungir ne thurst, sorowe ne syknesse,
Ne gret emprisis for to take on hande,
Sheding of blode, ne manful hardinesse,
Ne ofte wounding at faultis by distresse,
Nor in parting of life, nor deth also,
Al is for nought; Love taketh no hedè therto. 420

But lesingoures with ther base flattirie,
Through ther falsshede, and with ther doublenesse,
With talis newe, and many fainid lie,
By false semblaunt and counterfeit humbleesse,
Undir colour depainte with stedfastnesse,
With fraude covered under a pitous face,
Acceptid be nowe rathist unto grace, 427

And can themselvin nowe best magnifie
With fainid porte and ther presumpcion;
They hauncin ther cause with false surquidrie,
Undir menyng of double entencion,
To thinkin one in ther opinion,
And saye' anothir to set them self alofte,
And hindir trouthe, as it is sene ful ofte. 434

The whichè thinge I bye nowe al to dere,
 Thankid be Venus and the god Cupide,
 As it is fene by mine oppressid chere,
 And by his arowes that stycken in my side,
 That save my deth I nothinge elles abide
 Fro day to day, alas the hardè while!
 Whenevir his darte that hym lyst to file, 441

My woful hertè for to rive atwo,
 For faute of mercy and lack of pite
 Of her that causith al my paine and wo,
 And lyfte not onis of grace for to se
 Unto my trothe thorough her cruelte;
 And most of al for this I me complaine,
 That she hath joy to laughin at my paine; 448

And wilfully she hath my deth ysworne
 Al giltileffe, and wote no causè why,
 Save for the trouthe that I had aforne
 To her alone to servin faithfully.
 O god of Love! all unto the I crye,
 And to thy blynde and double deite
 Of this my gret wronge I complainè me, 455

And to thy stormy wilful variaunce,
 Iment with chaunge and gret unstablenessse,
 Now up, now doune, so renning is thy chaunce,
 That the to trust may be no sikirnessse,
 I wite it nothinge but thy doublenessse;
 And who that is an archir and is blende
 Markith nothinge, but shotith ay by wende; 461

And for that he hath no discrecion
Without advise he let his arowe go;
For lacke of sight and also of reson,
In his shoting it happith oftin so
To hurte his frendist rathir than his fo :
So doith this blind god with his sharpe flone,
The trew he fleeth and lettith the false gone. 469

And of his wounding this is worst of al,
Whan he hurt doith to so cruil wretche,
And makith the sycke for to crie and cal
Unto his very foe to be his leche;
And harde it is, sothe, for a man to seche,
Upon the point of deth in jcoperdye,
Unto his foe to findin remedie. 476

Right thus farith it nowe evin by me,
That to my foe that gave my herte a wounde
Mote askin grace, and mercy, and pite,
And namily there where none may be founde,
For nowe my fore my lechè wil confounde,
And god of Kinde so ill hath set mine ure
My lyv'is foe to have my wounde in cure. 483

Alas the while nowe that I was borne,
Or that I evir sawe the brightè sonne!
For nowe I se plaine that ful longe asorne
Or I was borne my destiny was sponne
By the Sisterne, to sle me yf they conne,
For they my deth had shopin or my sherte,
Onely for trouth I may it not asterte. 490

The mighty goddesse also of Nature,
 That undir God hath the whole govirnaunce
 Of worldely thinges committid to her cure,
 Disposid have through her wise purveiaunce
 To give my lady so moche suffisaunce
 Of al vertues, and therewithal purvyde
 To murdre Trowth hath take Daungir to gide: 497

For bounte, beaute, shape, and semelihede,
 For prudence, wit, and passingly fairenesse,
 For benigne porte, glad chere, with lowlyhede,
 Of womanhede right plenteous largenesse,
 Dame Nature dyd in her fully empresse
 Whan she her wrought, and althir last Disdaine
 To hindir Trouthe she made her chambirlaine; 504

Whan Mistrust eke and False Suspeccion,
 With Misbeleve, she madin for to be
 Chese of counsaile, to this conclusion,
 For to exilin Trouthe and eke Pite,
 Out of her courte to makin Mercy fle,
 So that Dispite now holdith forthe her reine
 Through hasty bileve of tales that men seine. 511

And thus I' am, only for my trowth, alas!
 Murdrid and slayn with wordis sharpe and kene,
 Although gyltlesse God wote of al trespas,
 And lye and blede upon this coldè grene.
 Nowe mercy, swete! mercy, my liv'is quene!
 And to your grace of mercye yet I preye
 In your service that your true man may deye. 518

But if so be that I shal die algate,
And that I shal none othir mercy have,
Yet of my deth let this yben the date,
That by your wil I was brought to my grave,
Or hastily, if that you lyste me save,
My sharpe woundis, that akin so and blede,
Of mercy charme and also' of womanhede :

525

For othir charme plainly ne is there none
But onely mercy to helpe in this case,
For though my woundis blede evir in one
My lyfe, my deth, ystandith in your grace;
And though my gilte ybe nothings, alas!
I aske mercy in all my best entente,
Redy to dyin if that ye assente :

532

For there againist shal I never strive
In worde ne werkè, plainly I ne may,
For levir I have then to be alyve
To dye sothly, and it be to her paye,
Ye, though it shuldè be this samè day,
Or whan that evir her lyste to devise ;
Suffisith me to die in your servise.

539

Thou, God! that knowest the thought of every wight
Right as it is, in every thing maist se,
Yet er I dyin with al my ful myght
Lowly I pray to grauntin unto me
That ye, lady godely, faire, freshe, and fre!
Which onely sle me for defaute of routhe,
Or that I dyin ye may knowe my trouthe :

546

For that in sothe inow suffisith me
 And she it knowe in every circumstaunce,
 And aftir I am wel apaide that she,
 If that her lyst of deth to do vengeance,
 Unto me that am undir her lygeaunce;
 It fit me not her dome to disobeye,
 But at her luste fulle wilfully to deye.

553

Withoutin grutchinge or rebellion
 In wil or wordis wholly I assente,
 Or any manir contradiction,
 Fully to be at her commaundement;
 And if I dyin, in my testament
 My herte I sende and my spirite also,
 What so evir she lyst with 'hem to do.

560

And aldir last unto her womanhede
 And to her mercy me I recommaunde,
 That lye nowe here betwixin hope and drede,
 Abidinge plainly what she list commaunde,
 For uttirly this ne is no demaunde;
 Welcome to me whilis me lastith breth,
 Ryght at her choise, where it be lyfe or deth.

567

And in this matir more what might I faine,
 Sithe in her hand and in her wil is al,
 Bothe lyfe and deth, my joye and al my peine?
 And, finally, my heste holdin I shall
 Tyl my spirite by destinye fatal,
 Whan that her lystith fro my body wende,
 Have here my trouth; and thus I make an ende. 574

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And with that worde he gan to fighe as fore,
Like as his hert yrivin would atwaine,
And helde his pece, and spake no wordè more;
But for to se his wo and mortal paine
The teris gonin fro mine eyin raine
Ful piteoufly, for very inwarde rothe
That I him 'sawè so long wishyng for troth.

581

And al this while my selfe I keptè close
Amonge the bowis, and my selfe gonne hide,
Tyl at the last the woful man arose,
And to a lodge ywent there close beside,
Where al the May his custome was t'abyde,
Sole to complainin of his painis kene
From yere to yere undir the bowis grene.

583

And for bycause that it drewe to the night,
And that the sonnè his arke diurnal
Ypassid was, so that his persaunt lyght,
His brightè bemis and his streemis al,
Were in the wavis of the watir fal
Undir the bordure of our ocean,

His chare of golde his course so swiftly ran;

595

And while the twilight and the rowis rede
Of Phœbus light were deaurat alite
A penne I toke, and gan me fast to spede
The woful plaintis of this man to write
All worde by worde right as he dyd endite;
Like as I herde and coude him tho reporte
I have here set, your hertis to disporte.

602

If ought be misse laye alle the wite on me,
 For I am worthy for to bere the blame;
 If any thinge amyssle reportid be
 'To make this ditte for to semè lame,
 Through myne unconning for to faine the same
 Like as this man his Complaint dyd expresse,
 I aske you mercy and forgivènesse.

609

And as I wrote me thought I sawe asferre,
 Aferre in the west, lustily appere
 Esperus, the so bright and godely sterre,
 So glade, so faire, so persaunte, eke of chere,
 I menè Venus, with her bemis clere,
 That hevy hertis only to releve
 Is wonte of custome for to shewe at eve;

616

And I as fast sel adowne on my kne,
 And evin thus to her gan I to prey;
 O lady Venus, so seire on to se!
 Let not this sothfast man for his trouthe deye,
 For that joy which thou haddist whan thou leye
 With Mars thy knight when Vulcanus yfonde,
 And with a chaine unvisibile you bonde

623

Togidir bothè tway, in the same whyle
 That al the courte above celestia
 At your shamè began to laughe and smyle:
 Ah! fairist lady! willy fonde at al,
 Comforte to careful goddis immortal
 Be helping nowe, and do thy diligence
 To let the stremis of thine influence

630

Discendin downe in forthering of the trouth,
 Namely of 'hem that lye in sorowe bounde;
 Shew now thy might, and on ther wo have routh
 Er that false Daungir fle 'hem and confounde;
 And special let thy might in this be founde
 For to help and focour what that thou may
 The trewe man that in the herbir lay, 637

And al that trewe are forthir for his sake,
 O gladè sterre! o lady Venus myne!
 And cause his lady him to grace to take;
 Her hert of stele to mercy so encline,
 Er that thy bemis go up to declyne,
 And er that thou nowe go fro us adowne,
 For that love which thou haddist to Adowne. 644

And whan that she was gone unto her rest
 I rose anone, and home to bed ywente,
 For wery' I was, me thought it for the best,
 Desiring thus in al my best entente
 That al trewe men that be with daungir shente
 With mercy may, in relese of ther paine,
 Recurid be er Maye come este againe. 651

And for that I ne may no lengir wake
 Farewel, ye loviris al that be trewe,
 Praying to God, and thus my leve I take,
 That er the sonne to morowe be ryfen newe,
 And er he have ayen his rosin hewe,
 That eche of you may havin soche a grace
 His owne lady in armis to embrace; 658

I mene thus only, in al honeste,
 Withoutin more, ye may togidir speke
 What so ye lystin at gode liberte,
 That eche may to othir ther herte ybreke,
 On Jelousie only to be awreke,
 That hath so long of malice and envy
 Ywerrid Trouthe with his tyranny.

665

L'ENVOYE.

Princesse! plesith it your benignite
 This lityl dyte for to have in minde
 Of your womanhede, also for to se
 That your trew man may of you mercy find
 And pite eke, that longe hath be behinde;
 Let him againe be provokid to grace,
 For by my trouthe it is against alle kinde
 That false Daungere should occupye his place.

673

Go, litil quaire, unto my liv'is quene,
 And to my very hert'is soveraine,
 And be right glad for that she shal the sene;
 Soche is thy grace: but I, alas! in paine
 Am leste behinde, and n'ot to whom to plaine,
 For Mercy, Ruthe, and Grace, and eke Pyte,
 Exilid be, that I may not attaine
 Recure to finde of mine adversite.

681

Explicit.

THE
COMPLAINT OF MARS & VENUS.

GLADITH ye lovirs in the morowe graie;
Lo Venus rissen emong yon rowis rede!
And flouris freshe honour ye this daie,
For when the sonne uprist then would thei sprede;
But ye lovirs that lie in any drede
Flyith, leste wickid tonguis you aspie;
Lo, yonde the sonne, the candle' of Jelousie! 7

With teris blewe and with a woundid hert
Taketh your leve, and with Sainct Ihon to borowe
Apefith somwhat of your painis smert,
Time comith est that cessin shall your sorow;
The glad night is worthe an hevie morowe.
Sainct Valentine, a foule thus herde I sing
Upon thy daie or sonnè gan up spring: 14

Yet sang this foule; I rede you all awake,
And ye that have not chofen in humble wise,
Without repentyng, chesith now your make,
Yet at the lest renoveleth your service,
And ye that have full chofen, as I devise,
Confermith it perpetually to dure,
And pacientlie takith your avinture. 21

And for the worship of this highè fesse
Yet woll I in my bridd'is wise ysyng
The sentence of the Complaint at the leste
That wofull Mars made at the departyng
Fro freshe Venus in a morownyng,
When Phœbus with his firie torchis rede
Ransaked hath every lovir in his drede, 28

Whilome the thre hevenis lorde above,
 As well by hevenliche revolucion
 As by deserte, hath wonne Venus his love,
 And she hath take hym in subjeccion,
 And as a maistresse taught him his lesson,
 Commaundyng hym nevyr in her service
 He were so bolde no lovyr to dispise :

35

For she forbade hym jelousie at all,
 And cruilte, and bofte, and tirannie;
 She made him at her luste so humble' and thrall,
 That when she dained to cast on him her eye
 He toke in pacience to live or die;
 And thus she bridlith him in her manere
 With nothing but with scorning of her chere.

42

Who reignith nowe in blisse but faire Venus,
 That hath this worthi knight in govirnaunce?
 Who singith nowe but Mars, that servith thus
 The fayre Venus, the causir of plesaunce?
 He bint him to perpetuel obeissaunce,
 And she binte her to lovin him for ever,
 But so be that his trespase it discover.

49

Thus be they knitte, and reignin as in heven,
 By loking most, as it fel on a tide,
 That by ther bothe assent was set a steven
 That Mars shall entre' as fast as he may glyde
 Into her nextè palays to abyde,
 Walking his course til she had him ytake,
 And he prayed her to haste her for his sake.

56

Than saide he thus; Myne hert'is lady swete!
 Ye knowin wel my myschese in that place,
 For sikirly tyl that I with you mete
 My lyfe stante there in avinture and grace,
 But whan I se the beaute of your face
 There is no drede of deth may do me smerte,
 For al your luste is ese unto mine herte.

She hath so grete compassion of her knight,
 That dwellith in solitude til she come,
 For it stode so that ylkè time no wight
 Counsaillid him, ne saide to him welcome,
 That nigh her wit for sorowe was oercome,
 Wherefore she spedd her as fast in her way
 Almoste in one daye as he did in tway.

The gret joye that ywas betwixe 'hem two
 Whan they be mette there maye no tongè tæl,
 There is no more but unto bedde they go,
 And thus in joye and blisse I lette 'hem dwel;
 This worthy Mars, that is of knighthode wel,
 The floure of fairnesse happith in his armes,
 And Venus kyssith Mars the god of Armes.

Sojournid hath this Mars, of which I rede,
 In chambre' amydde the palais privily
 A certaine time, til that him fel a drede
 Through Phœbus, that was comin hastily
 Within the palais yatis sturdily
 With torch in honde, of which the strems bright
 On Venus chambre knockidin ful light.

The chambre there as laye this freshe quene
 Depaintid was with white bolis grete,
 And by the light she knew that shon so shene
 That Phœbus came to bren 'hem with his hete;
 This silly Venus, ny dreint in teres wete,
 Enbrasith Mars, and said, Alas I die!
 The torch is come that all this worlde wol wric. 91

Up sterre tho Mars, him listid not to slepe
 Whan he his lady herdin so complaine,
 But for his nature was not for to wepe,
 In stede of teris from his eyin twaine
 The fire sparclis sprongin out for paine,
 And hente his hauberke that lay him beside;
 Fly wold he nought, ne might him selfin hide. 98

He throwith on his helme of hugè weight,
 And girt him with his swerde, and in his honde
 His mighty spere, as he was wont to feight,
 He shakith so that it almost to wonde;
 He shakith so that it almost to wonde;
 Ful hevy was he to walken ovir londe;
 He may not holde with Venus company,
 But badde her flye, lest Phœbus her espy. 105

O woful Mars, alas! what maist thou sain?
 That in the palais of thy disturbaunce
 Arte leste behind in paril to be flaine,
 And yet thereto is double thy penaunce,
 For she that hath thine hert in govirnaunce
 Is passid halfe the strems of thine eyen; 111
 That you n'ere swift wel maist thou wepe and crien.

Nowe flyeth Venus into Ciclinius tour
 With voidè corse, for fere of Phœbus light;
 Alas! and there ne hath she no focour,
 For she ne founde ne fey no manir wight,
 And eke as there she had but litil might,
 Wherfore her selvin for to hide and save
 Within the gate she fledde into a cave. 119

Darke was this cave, and smoking as the hel,
 Nat but two paas within the yate it stode;
 A naturel day in darke I let her dwel.
 Now wol I speke of Mars, furious and wode,
 For sorowe he wolde have seen his hert blode;
 Sith that he might done her no companie
 He ne rought not a mitè for to die. 126

So feble' he wext for hete and for his wo
 That nigh he swelt; he might unneth endure;
 He passith but a sterre in dayis two;
 Eut nertheles for al his hevy armure
 He foloweth her that is his liv'is cure,
 For whose departing he toke gretir yre
 Than he did for his brenning in the fire. 133

Aftir he walkith softly a paas,
 Complaining that it pite was to here;
 He saide, O lady bright, Venus! alas
 That er so wide a compas is my sphere!
 Alas, whan shal I mete you, hertè dere!
 This twelve dayis of April I endure
 Through jelous Phœbus this misaventure. 140

Now God helpe sely Venus all alone!
 But as God wolde it happid for to be
 That while that weping Venus made her mone
 Ciclinius riding in his chyvaunche
 Fro Venus, Valanus might this palais se,
 And Venus be salvith and makith chere,
 And her recevith as his frende ful dere.

147

Mars dwellith forth in his adversite,
 Complaining evir in her departing,
 And what his complaint was remembrith me,
 And therfore in this lustie morowning,
 As I best can, I wol it faine and sing,
 And aftir that I wol my leve ytake,
 And God yeve every wight joy of his make!

154

THE COMPLAINT OF MARS.

THE' ordir of Complaynt requireth skilfully
 That if a wight shall plainin pitously
 Ther mote be cause wherfore that men yplaine,
 Or men may deme he playnith folily
 And caufeles: alas! that am not I,
 Wherfore the grounde and cause of all my paine,
 So as my troublid witte may it attaine,
 I wol reherse, not for to have redresse,
 But to declare my grounde of hevinesse.

9

The first time, alas! that I was ywrought,
 And for certain effectis hidir brought
 By him that lordith eche intelligence,
 I yave my trewe service and my thought
 For evirmo, how dere I have it bought!
 To her that is of so gret excellence
 That what wight that shewith first her offence,
 Whan she is wrothe and taketh of him no cure,
 He may not longe in joye of love endure.

18

This is no fainid matir that I tel;
 My lady is the very fours and wel
 Of beaute, luste, fredome, and gentilnesse,
 Of riche array howe dere so men it sel,
 Of al disporte in whiche men frendly dwel,
 Of love and play, and of benigne humbleste,
 Of sowne of instrumentes of al swetnesse,
 And thereto so wel fortunèd and thewid
 That through the world her godenes is shewid:

27

What wondir is than though that I besette
 My service on soche one that may me knette
 To wele or wo, sithe it lithe in her might?
 Therefore myne herte for er I to her hette,
 Ne trewly for my deth shall I not lette
 To ben her trewist servant and her knight;
 I flattir nat, that may wete every wight,
 For this day in her service shal I dye;
 But grace be I se her nevir with eye.

36

To whom shal I plainin of my distresse?
 Who may me help, who may my hert redresse?
 Shal I complaine unto my lady fre?
 Nay, certis, for she hath soche hevynesse
 For fere and eke for wo, that as I gesse
 In litil time it would her bane ybe,
 But were she safe it were no force of me:
 Alas that evir lovirs mote endure
 For love so many per'ilous avinture!

45

For though so be that lovirs be as trewe
 As any metal that is forgid newe,
 In many' a case 'hem tidith oft sorowe;
 Somtime ther ladies wol nat on 'hem rewe,
 Somtimis if that Jelousy it knewe
 They mightin lightly lay ther hed to borowe;
 Somtime envious folke with tongis horowe
 Depravin 'hem: alas! whom may they plese?
 But he be false no lovir hath his ese.

54

But what availith soch a long fermoun
 Of avinturis of love up and down?
 I wol retourne and spekin of my paine:
 The point is this, of my distructioun
 My right lady and my salvacioun
 Is in affray, and n'ot to whom to plaine:
 O hertè swete! o lady soverayne!
 For your disese I ought wel swoun and swelt,
 Though I none othir harme ne drede yfelt.

63

To what fine made the god that sytte so hie
 Beneth him othir love or companye,
 And strainith folke to love maugre ther hed?
 And than ther joye for aught I can espie
 Ne lastith not the twinkeling of an eye,
 And some have nevir joye til they be ded;
 What menith this, what is this mistihed?
 Wherto constrainith he his folke so fast
 Thing to desirin but it should ylast?

72

And though he made a lovir love a thing,
 And makith it seme stedfast and during,
 Yet putteth he in it soche misavinture
 That rest ne is there none in his yeving;
 And that is wondir that so juste a king
 Ydothe soche hardnesse unto his creture;
 Thus whethir lovè breke or ellis dure
 Algatis he that hath with love tō done
 Hath oftir wo than chaungid is the mone.

81

It semeth he hath to lovirs enmyte,
 And lyke a fisher, as men may al day se,
 Baitith his anglehoke with some plesauce,
 Til many' a fishe is wode to that he be
 Cesid therwith, and then at erst hath he
 Al his desire, and therwithal mischaunce,
 And though the line ybreke he hath penaunce,
 For with that hoke he woundid is so fore
 That he his wagis hath for evirmore.

90

The broche of Thebis was of soche a kinde,
 So ful of rubyes and of stones of Inde
 That every wight that sette on it an eye
 He wende anone to worthe out of his mynde;
 So fore the beaute would his hert ybynde
 'Til it he had him thought he must ydie;
 And when that it was his than should he drie
 Soche wo for drede aye while that he it had
 That welnigh for the fere he should be mad;

99

And whan it was fro his possession
 'T han had he double wo and passion
 That he so faire a jewil hath forgo;
 But yet this broche, as in conclusion,
 Was not the cause of his confusion,
 But he that wrought it enfortuned it so
 That every wight that had it should have wo,
 And therfore in the worchir was the vice,
 And in the coveitour, that was so nice.

108

So farith it by lovirs and by me,
 For though my lady have so grete beaute
 That I was mad to I had gette her grace
 She was not cause of mine adversite,
 But he that wroughtin her, as mote I the,
 That put so gret a beaute in her face
 That made me coveitin and so purchase
 Myne ownè deth; him wite I that I die,
 And mine unwit that er I clambe so hie.

117

But to you hardy knightis of renowne,
 Sith that ye be of my devisyowne,
 Al be' I not worthy to so gret a name,
 Yet saine these clerkis I am your patrone,
 Therfore ye ought have some compassion
 Of my disese, and take it nat agame,
 The proudest of you may be made ful tame,
 Wherefore I pray you of your gentilleſſe
 That ye complainin for mine heviness. 126

And ye, my ladyes, that ben trew and stable,
 By way of kinde ye oughtin to ben able
 To have pite of folke that ben in paine;
 Nowe have ye cause to clothin you in fable;
 Sith that your empères the honorable
 Is desolate wel oughtin ye to plaine;
 Nowe shoude your holy teris fal and raine:
 Alas! your honour and your emperice
 Nigh ded for drede ne can her not chevice. 135

Complainith eke ye lovirs al in fere
 For her that with unfainid humble chere
 Was evir redy to do you socour,
 Complainith her that er hath be you dere,
 Complainith beaute, fredome, and manere,
 Complainith her that endith your labour,
 Complainith thilke ensample' of al honour,
 That nevir yet dyd ought but gentilness;
 Kythith therfore in her some kindeness. 144

THE COMPLAINT OF VENUS.

THERE n'ys so high comfort to my plesaunce,
 Whan that I am in any hevinesse,
 As for to have leysir of remembraunce
 Upon the manhode and the worthyneffe,
 Upon the trouthe and on the stedfastnes,
 Of him whose I am al while I maye dure;
 There ought to blamin me no creäture,
 For every wight praisith his gentilleffe.

8

In him is bounte, wisedome, govirnaunce,
 Well more than any mann'is witte can gesse,
 For Grace hath wolde so ferforth him avaunce
 That of knightthod he is parfite richesse,
 Honour honourith him for his noblesse,
 Therto so wel hath sourmid him Nature
 That I am his for er I him ensure,
 For every wight praisith his gentilleffe.

16

And natwithstanding all his suffisaunce
 His gentil herte is of so gret humbleffe
 To me in worde, in werke, and in countenaunce,
 And me to serve is al his besinesse,
 That I am sette in very sykirnesse;
 Thus ought I to blisse wel mine avintour,
 Sith that him liste me servin and honour,
 For every wight praisith his gentilleffe.

24

Nowe certis, Love, it is right covenable
 That men ful dere aby thy noble thinges,
 As wake abedde and fastin at the table,

Weping to laugh, and singe in complainynges,
 And downe to castin visage and lokinges,
 Oftin to chaunge visage and countinaunce,
 Playe in slepinge, and dremin at the daunce,
 Al the revers of any gladde feling.

32

Jelousy he hangid by a cable,
 She woldé al knowin through her espiyng,
 There dothe no wight nothing so resonable
 That al n'is harme in her ymagining;
 Thus dere abought is Love in his yeving,
 Whiche ofte he yevith without ordinaunce,
 As sorowe' ynough and litil of plesaunce,
 Al the revers of any glade feling.

40

A litil tyme his yest is agreable,
 But ful accombèrous is the usinge,
 For subtil Jelousy the discevable
 Ful oftin tyme ycausith distourbinge;
 Thus ben we evir in drede and suffring:
 In no certaine we languishen in penaunce,
 And have wel ofte many an harde mischaunce,
 Al the revers of any gladde feling.

48

But certis, Love, I saye not in soche wise
 That for to scape out of your lace I ment,
 For I so longe have ben in your service
 That for to lete of wil I ner assent,
 No force though jelousye me doe tourment;
 Suffisith me to se him whan I may,
 And therfore certis to mine ending day
 To love him best shal me nevir repent.

56

And certis, Love, whan I me wel advise
 Of any' estate that man may represent
 Than have ye made me thorough your franchise
 Chese in the best that evir in erthe went;
 Nowe love well, hert, and loke thou nevir stent,
 And lette the jelous putte it in assaye
 That for no paine ne wol I not say naye;
 To love him best shal I nevir repent.

64

O herte! to the it ought ynoughe suffice
 That Love so highe a grace hath to you sent
 To chose the worthyist in allè wise,
 And most agreeable to mine entent;
 Sekith no ferthir neithir way ne went,
 Sith ye have suffisaunce unto my paye:
 Thus wol I ende this Complaint or this lay;
 To love him best shal I nevir repent.

72

L'ENVOYE.

Princes, receveth this complaininge in gre,
 Unto your excellent benignite
 Directe astir my lital suffisaunce,
 For elde, that in my spirite dullith me,
 Hath of enditing al the subtilte
 Welnigh herafte out of my remembraunce;
 And eke to me it is a grete penaunce,
 Sith rime in Englishe hath soche scarcite,
 To' folowe worde by worde the curiosite
 Of Granfon, flour of 'hem that make in Fraunce. 83

*Explicit.**This**Ma**Ch**P* LON

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THE LAMENTACION

OF MARIE MAGDALEINE.

*This treatise is taken out of St. Origen, wherein Mary
Magdalen lamenteth the cruell death of her Saviour
Christ.*

64 **P**LONGID in the wawe of mortall distresse,
Alas for wo! to whom shal I complein?
Or who shall devoide this grete heviness
Frome', wofull Marie, wofull Magdalen!
My Lord is gon; alas! who wrought this tein?
This sodain chaunce persith my herte so depe
That nothing can I do but waile and wepe. 7

72 My Lorde is gone that here in grave was laied
Aftir his grete passion and deth cruell;
Alas! who hath hym thus again betrayed?
Or what man here aboutin can me tell
Where he' is become the Prince of Israell,
Jesus of Naz'areth, my ghostly succour,
My parsite love, and hope of all honour! 14

81 What creture hath hym hennis caryid,
Or how might this so sodainly befall?
I would I had here with him taryid,
And so should I have had my purpose all:
I bought ointmentes full precious and roial,
Where with I hoped his corps to have anointed,
But he thus gone my minde is disapointed. 21

While I therefore advertise and beholde
 This pitous chauncè here in my presence
 Full little marvaile though my hert be colde,
 Confidiryng, lo! my Lord's absence:
 Alas that I so full of negligence
 Should be foundin! bicause I come so late
 All men maie saie I am infortunate.

23

Cause of my sorowe you maie undirstonde,
Quia tulerunt Dominum meum,
 An othir is that I ne maie him fonde,
 I wote nere *ubi posuerunt eum;*
 Thus I muste bewaile *dolorem meum*
 With hertie wepyng; I can no bet deserve
 Till Deth approche my hertè for to kerve.

35

My herte opprest with sodain avinture
 By fervent anguishe is bewrappid so
 That long this life I ne maie not endure,
 Soche is my pain, soch is my mortall wo;
 Nevirthelesse to what parte shall I go
 In hope to findin myne owne turtill true,
 My liv'is joye, my soverain Lorde Jesu!

43

Sith all my joye, that I call his presence,
 Is thus removed, now I am full of mone;
 Alas the while I made no providence
 For this mishap! wherefore I sigh and grone:
 Succour to finde to what place might I gone!
 Fain I would to some man my hertè breke;
 I n'ot to whom I maie complain or speke.

49

Alone I stande full sorie and full sad,
 Which hopid to have seen my Lorde and Kyng;
 Small cause have I to be merie or glad
 Remembryng this bittirfull departyng:
 In this worlde ne is no creture livyng
 That was to me so gode and gracious,
 His love also then golde more precious.

56

Full fore I sigh without comfort again,
 There is no cure to my salvacion,
 His brenning love my hert so doth constrain,
 Alas, here is a wofull permutacion!
 Whereof I finde no joye nor consolacion,
 Therefore my pain all onely to confesse
 With deth I fere woll ende my hevinesse.

63

This wo and anguish is intollerable:
 If I bide here life can I not sustaine,
 If I go hence my paines be incurable;
 Where him to finde I knowe no place certain;
 And thus I ne wote of these thingis twain
 Whiche I maie take and which I maie refuse;
 My hert is wounded heron to thinke or muse.

70

A while I shall stande in this morowning
 In hope if any vision would appere
 That of my love might tell some gode tyding,
 Whiche into joy might chaunge my wepyng chere;
 I trust in his grace and his mercie dere;
 But at the lest, though I therewith me kill,
 I shall not spare to waile and wepe my fill.

77

And if that I die in soche avinture
 I can no more but welcome as my chaunce;
 My bones shall rest here in this sepulture;
 My life, my deth, is at his ordinaunce;
 It shal be tolde in lasting remembraunce:
 Thus to departin is to me no shame,
 And also thereof I 'am nothyng to blame.

84

Hope against me so hath her course itake
 That there is no more, but thus shall I die:
 I se right well my Lorde hath me forsake,
 But in my conceipt cause know I none why:
 Although he be farre hence and nothing nye
 Yet my wofull herte after hym doeth seke,
 And causeth teres to ren down by my cheke.

91

Thinking, alas! I have lost his presence,
 Which in this worlde was all my sustinaunce;
 I crie and call with hertie diligence,
 But there is no wight givith attendaunce,
 Me to certifie of myne enquireaunce,
 Wherefore I will to all this world bewraie
 How that my Lorde is slain and born awaie.

98

Though that I mourne it ne is no grete wonder,
 Sithe he is all my joye in speciall;
 And nowe I thinke we be so farre asunder
 That hym to se I fere nevir I shall;
 It helpith no more astir hym to call,
 Ne after hym to' enquire in any coste:
 Alas! how is he thus ygone and lost?

105

The Jewis I thinke full of miserie,
 Yet in malice by ther busie cure
 With force and might of gilefull trecherie
 Hath entermined my Lord's sepulture,
 And borne awaie that precious figure,
 Levying of it nothyng; if thei' have doen so
 Marrid I am; alas, what shall I do!

With ther vengeaunce insaciabie
 Now have thei hym gileless entretid so
 That to reporte it is to lamentable,
 Thei bete his bodie from toppē to the toe,
 Nevir man was yborne that feltē soche woe;
 Thei woundid hym, alas! with all grevaunce,
 The blode down reilid in most habundaunce;

The blodie rowis stremed down ovir all,
 Thei him assailid so malicioudlie
 With ther scourgis and strokis bestiall;
 Thei sparid not, but smote incessauntlie;
 To satisfie ther malice thei were busie:
 Thei spit in his face, thei smote here and there;
 He groned full sore, and swete many a tere.

Thei crounid hym with thornis sharpe and kene,
 The vainis rent, the blode ran down apace,
 With blode ovircome were bothe his eyen,
 And bolne with strokis was his blessid face;
 Thei hym entretid as men without grace,
 Thei kneid to hym, and made many a scorne;
 Like helhoundis they have hym all to torne:

Upon a mightie crosse in length and brede
 (These turmentours shewid ther cursidnesse)
 Thei nailid hym without pitie or drede,
 His precious blode brast out in largenesse,
 Thei strained hym along as men mercilesse;
 The verie jointes all to myne apparence
 Rived asondir for ther grete violence.

140

All this I beholding with mine eyen twain
 Stode there beside with rusfull attendaunce,
 And er me thought he beyng in that pain
 Lokid on me with dedly countinaunce,
 As he' had said in his speciall remembraunce
 Farwell Magdalen, depart must I nedes hens,
 My herte is *tangam cera liquefscens*.

147

Whiche rusfull sight when that I gan beholde
 Out of my witte I almoste tho distraught,
 I tare my here, my handis wrang and folde,
 And of the sight my hert dranke soche a draught
 That many a fall fwounyng there I caught;
 I brused my bodie fallyng on the grounde,
 Whereof I fele many a grevous wounde.

154

Then these wretchis, full of all frowardnesse,
 Gave hym to drinke eisell temprid with gall;
 Alas! that poison full of bittirnesse
 My lov'is chere causid then to appall,
 And yet thereof might he not drinke at all,
 But spake these wordis, as him thought it best,
 Fathir of hevin! *consummatum est*.

161

Then knelid I doune in pain'is outrage,
 Clipping the croffe within myne armis twain,
 His blode distillid doune on my visage,
 My clothis eke the droppis did distain;
 To have dyid for hym I would full fain,
 But what shoulde it availe if I did so
 Sith he' is *suspensus in patibulo?* 168

And thus my Lorde full dere was all disgised
 With blode, and pain, and woundis many one,
 His veinis brast, his jointis all to rived,
 Partying asondir the fleshe fro the bone;
 But I sawe that he hing not there alone,
 For *cum iniquis deputatus est*,
 Not like a man but like a leprous best. 175

A blinde knight men ycallid Longias
 With a spere aproched to my Sovèrain,
 Launfying his side full pitouflic, alas!
 That his precious herte be clave in twain,
 The purple blode eke fro the hertis vain
 Doune railid right fast in moſte ruſull wiſe,
 With chriſtal water brought fro Paradife. 182

When I behelde this woſull paſſion,
 I wote not how, by ſodain avinture
 My hert was perſed with very compaſſion,
 That in me remained no life of nature,
 Strokiſ of dethe I felt without meſure,
 My deth'is wounde I caught with woe oppreſt,
 And brought to point as my hert ſhuld ybreſt. 189

The wounde, the hert, and blode, of my darling
 Shal never slide fro my memorial,
 The byttir paines also of tourmenting
 Within my soule be gravin principal;
 The spere, alas! that was so sharpe withall
 So thrillid my herte, as to my feling,
 That body and soule were at departing.

196

Sone as I might I releved up againe,
 My brethe I coude not very wel restore,
 Feling my self drownid in so grete paine,
 Both body' and soule me thought wer al to tore,
 Violent fallis grevid me right fore;
 I wept, I bledde, and with my selfe I fared
 As one that for his life nothing had cared.

203

I loking up unto that rufull rode
 Sawe first the visage pale of that figure,
 But so pitous a sight spettid with blode
 Sawe nevyr yet no living creature;
 So it exceedid the boundes of mesure,
 That mann'is minde with al his wittis five
 Is nothing able that paine to discrive.

210

Than gan I there min armis to unbrace,
 Up lifting my handis ful mourningly
 I fighid and fore sobbid in that place,
 Both hevin and erthe might have herde me crie
 Weping, and said Alas! incessiauntly,
 Ah, my fwete herte, my gostly paramour!
 Alas, I may nat thy body socour!

217

O'bleffid Lorde! how fierfe and how cruel
 Thefe curfid wightis nowe hath the yflaine,
 Kerving, alas! thy body everidel
 Wounde within wounde, full byttir is thy pain;
 Nowe wolde God that I might to the attaine
 To naile my body faft unto thy tre,
 So that of this paine thou mightift go fre! 224

I can nat reporte ne make reherfaile
 Of my demening with the circumftaunce,
 But wel I wote the fpere with every naile
 Thirlid my foule by inwarde refemblaunce,
 Which nevir fhall out of my remembraunce;
 During my life it woll caufe me to waile
 As ofte as I remembre that bataile. 231

Ah, ye Jewes! worfe than doggis rabiate,
 What moved you thus cruilly him to' aray?
 He nevir difplefed you, nor caufed debate,
 Your love and true hertes he coveytid aye;
 He preched, he teched, he fhewid the right way,
 Wherefore ye lyke tyrantes wode and way-warde.
 Nowe have him thus yflaine for his rewarde. 238

Ye ought to' have remembrid one thing fpecial,
 His favour, grace, and his magnificence;
 He was your prince borne, and lorde ovir all,
 Howe be it ye toke him in fmal reverence;
 He was ful meke in fuffring your offence,
 Nertheles ye devoured him with one affent,
 Ashungry wolves doth the lambe innocent. 245

Where was your pite, 'o peple mercilesse!
 Arming your selfe with falsheid and treson,
 On my Lorde ye have shewid your wodenesse,
 Like no men but bestis without reson;
 Your malyce he suffrid for the s^cson:
 Your paine wol come, ne thinke it nat to slacke;
Man without mercy of mercy shal lacke. 252

O traitours and maintainirs of madnesse!
 Unto your foly' I ascribe al my paine,
 Ye have me deprived of joye and gladnesse
 So deling with my Lorde and foveraine;
 Nothing ne shulde I nede thus to complaine
 If he' had lived in pece and tranquillite
 Whom ye have slaine through your iniquite. 259

Farewel, your noblenesse that somtime did raine!
 Farewel your worship, your glory, and fame!
 Hereaftir to lyve in hate and disdaine
 Marvaile ye not; for your trespase and blame
 Unto shame is tournid al your gode name:
 Upon you now wol wondir every nation
 As peple of a most vile reputation. 266

These wickid wretchis, these houndis of hel,
 As I have tolde plaine here in this sentence,
 Were not content my dere love thus to quel,
 But yet they must embefile his presence,
 As I perceve; by covert violence
 They have him conveyed to my displeure,
 For here is laste but nakid sepulture: 273

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Wherefore of trowth and rightfull judgèment,
That ther malice againe maye be acquitted,
Aftir my verdite and avifèment,
Of false murdre they fhullin be endited,
Of theft alfo, which fhall not be respited,
And in al hafte they fhall be hanged and drawe;
I wol my felfe plede this caufe in the lawe. 280

Alas! yf I with a trewe attendaunce
Had ftyl abiddin with my Lord's corfe,
And kept it ftill with trewe perfeveraunce,
Than had nat befall this woful devorfe;
But as for my paine welcome, and no force:
This fhall be my fonge where fo er I go,
Departing is the grounde of al my wo. 287

I fe right wel now in my painis fmerte
There is no wounde of fo grevous dolour
As is the wounde of my careful herte;
Sithin I have lofte thus my paramour
Al my fwetneffe is tournid into four;
Mirthe to my herte nothing ne maie convey
But he that bereth therof bothe locke and key. 294

The joye excellent of bliffed Paradife
Maye me, alas! in no wife re-comforte,
Songe of angel nothing may me fuffife,
As in min hertè nowe to make difporte;
Al I refufe but that I might reforte
Unto my love, the wel of godelihede,
For whose longing I trowe I fhall be ded. 301

Of painful labour and tourment corpo'ral
 I ne make therof none excepcion,
 Painis of hel I wol passe ovir al
 My love to finde in myne affeccion;
 So grete to him is my delectacion,
 A thousande timis martrid wolde I be
 His bleffid body ones if I might se.

308

About this worlde, so large in all compace,
 I shal not spare to renne my life during,
 My fete also shal not rest in one place
 Tyl of my love I may here some tiding,
 For whose absence my handis nowe I wring;
 To thinke on him cese shal nevir my minde:
 O gentil Jesu! where shal I the finde?

315

Jerusalem I wol serche place fro place,
 Sion, the Vale of Josaphath also,
 And if I finde him not in al this space
 By Mount Oilvet to Beth'any woll I go;
 These waies wol I wandir and many mo,
 Nazareth, Bethleem, Mountana Jude;
 No travaile shal me paine him for to se.

322

His blissid face if I might se and finde
 Serche I wolde evèry coste and countrey,
 The fardist parte of Egypt or hote Inde
 Shulde be to me but a litil journey.
 Howe is he thus gone or takin away!
 If I knewe the ful trouth and certentè
 Yet from this care relefid might I be.

329

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Into wildirneffe I thinke best to go,
 Sithe I can no more tidinges of him here,
 There may I my lyfe ledin to and fro,
 There may I dwel and to no man apere;
 To towne ne village woll I not come nere;
 Alone in wodes, in rockes, and in caves depe,
 I may at mine owne will both waile and wepe. 336

Myn eyin twaine withoutin variaunce
 Shal nevir cese, I promise faithfully,
 There for to wepin with gret aboundaunce
 Byttir teris renning incesfauntly,
 The whiche teris medlid ful petously
 With the very blode er shall renne also,
 Expressing in mine hert the grevous wo. 243

Worldely fode and sustenaunce I desire none,
 Soche living as I finde soch wol I take,
 Rotis that growin on the craggy stone
 Shal me suffise, with watir of the lake;
 Than thus may I say for my Lord's sake,
Fuerunt mihi lacrymæ meæ
In deserto panes, die ac nocte. 330

My body to clothe it makith no force,
 A mourning mantil shal be sufficient,
 The grevous woundis of his pitous corse
 Shal be to me a ful royal garnement,
 He departid thus I am best content;
 His crosse with nailis and scourgis withal
 Shal be my thought and paine especial. 357

Thus wol I live, as I have here ytolde,
 If I may any longè time endure,
 But I fere Deth is ovir me so bolde
 That of my purpose I can not be sure;
 My painis encrefin without mesure,
 For of longe lyfe who can lay any reson?
 Al thing is mortal, and hath but a feson.

364

I sigh ful fore, and it is ferre yfet;
 Myne hert I fele now bledith inwardly,
 The bloody teres I may in no wise let;
 Sithe of my paine I finde no remedye
 I thank God of al if that I nowe dye;
 His will perfourmid I holde me content;
 My soule let him have that hath it me lent,

371

For lengir to' endure it 'is intollerable,
 My woful herte is inflamid so huge,
 That no sorow to myne is comparable,
 Sithe of my minde I ne finde no refuge,
 Yet I him require as a rightful juge
 'To devoide fro me the inwarde sorowe,
 Lest that I live not to the nexte morowe.

378

Within mine hert is impressid ful fore
 His royal forme, his shappe, his semelines,
 His porte, his chere, his godenes evirmore,
 His noble persone, with al gentilnes;
 He is the welle of allè parfitnes,
 The very Redemir of al mankinde,
 Him love I best with herte, and soule, and minde.

385

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In his absence my paines ful bittir be,
 Right wel I may it fele nowe inwardely,
 No wondir is though they hurte or fle me,
 They causin me to crie so rufully;
 Myne herte oppressed is so wondirfully
 Onely for him, which so is bright of ble,
 Alas, I tröwe I shal him nevir se!

392

My joye is translate ful farre in exile,
 My myrthe is chaungid into paynis colde;
 My lyfe I think endurith but a while;
 Anguifhe and paine is that that I beholde,
 Wherefore my handis thus I wringe and folde;
 Into this grave I loke, I cal, I pray,
 Deth remainith and life is borne away.

399

Now must I walk and wandir here and there,
 God wot to what partis I shal me dresse,
 With quaking hert wepinge many a tere,
 To seke out my love and all my swetnes;
 I wolde he wyft what mortal hevines
 About min herte renewith more and more,
 Than wolde he nat kepe pite long in store.

406

Withoutin him I may not longe endure,
 His love so fore workith within my brest,
 And er I wepe before this sepulture
 Sighing ful fore, as mine herte shulde ybrest;
 During my lyfe I shal obtaine no rest,
 But mourne and wepe where that evir I go,
 Making complaint of al my mortal wo.

413

Fast I crie, but there is no audience,
 My comming hidir was him for to plesse,
 My soule opprest is here with his absence;
 Alas, he list not set mine herte in ese!
 Wherfore to paine my selfe with al disese
 I shal not spare tyl he take me to grace,
 Or ellis I shal sterue here in this place.

410

But onis if that I might with him speke
 It were al my joy, with parfite plesaunce;
 So that I might to him myne herte breke
 I shulde anonie deuoid al my grevaunce,
 For he' is the blisse of very recreaunce;
 But now, alas! I can nothing do so,
 For in ftede of joy naught have I but wo.

412

His noble corse within min hert'is rote
 Depe is ygravid, whiche shal nevir flake;
 Nowe is he gone, to what place I ne wote,
 I mourne, I wepe, and al is for his sake:
 Sithin he is paste here a vowe I make
 With hertely promise, and therto me binde,
 Nevir to cese til that I may him finde.

414

Unto his mothir I thinke for to go,
 Of her haply some comforte may I take;
 But one thinge yet me ferith and no mo,
 Yf that I any mencion of him make
 Of my wordis she wolde trimble and quake;
 And whō coude her blame, she having but one?
 The sonne borne away the mothir wol mone.

416

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Sorowes many hath she suffrid trewly
 Sith that she first conceivid him and bare,
 And sevin thinges there be most specially
 That drownith her hert in sorowe and care,
 Yet lo! in no wise maye they not compare
 With this one now, the whiche if that she knew
 She wolde her painis everichone renewe. 448

Gret was her sorowe by mennis saiying
 Whan in the temple Simeon Justus
 Shewid to her these wordis, prophesying,
Tuam animam pertransibit gladius;
 Also whan Herode, that tyraunt furious,
 Her childe pursuid in evèry place;
 For his life went neithir mercy ne grace. 455

She mournid fore whan that she knewe him gone;
 Full longe she fought or she him founde ayen;
 Whan he went to deth his crosse him upon
 It was to her sight a full rewful paine;
 Whan he hong theron betwene thevis twaine,
 And the spere unto his herte thruit was right,
 She swounid, and to the grounde there yight: 462

Whan ded and bloody in her lappè lay
 His blissed body, bothe handes and fete al tore,
 She cryid out and said, Now, welaway!
 Thus arayid was nevir man before:
 Whan haist was made his body to be bore
 Unto sepulture here for to remaine
 Unnethis for wo she coude her sustaine. 469

The sorowes sevin like swerdes every one
 His mothir's herte woundid fro syde to syde,
 But if she knewe her sonnè thus ygone
 Out of this worlde she shuld with deth yride,
 For care she coude no lengir here abide,
 Having no more joy nor consolacioun
 Than I here standing in this stacioun :

476

Wherefore her to se I dare nat presume;
 Fro her presence I wol my selfe refraine;
 Yet had I levir to dye and consume
 Than his mothir shulde have any more paine,
 Nethèles her sonne I wolde se ful faine;
 His presence was very joye and swetnes,
 His absence is but sorowe' and hevinesse.

483

There is no more, sith I may him nat mete
 Whom I desire above al othir thing;
 Nede I must take the souir with the swete,
 For of 'his noble corse I here no tiding;
 Ful ostin I crie, and my handis wring:
 Myne herte, alas! relentith al in paine,
 Whiche wol ybrastin both finewe and vaine.

490

Alas, howe' unhappy was this woful hour
 Wher'in is thus mispendid my service!
 For min entent and eke my true labour
 To none effecte may come in any wise;
 Alas! I thinke if he do me dispise,
 And list not take my simple observaunce,
 There is no more, but deth is my finaunce.

497

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I have him called, *sed non respondet mihi*,
 Wherefore my mirth is tournid to mourning;
 O, my dere Lord! *quid mali feci tibi*,
 That me to comforte I finde no' erthely thing?
 Alas! have compassion of my cryng;
 Yf fro me *faciem tuam abscondis*

There is no more but *consumere me vis.*

504

Within myne hert is groundid thy figure,
 That al this world'is horrible tourment
 May' it not awage, it' is so without mesure,
 It is so brenning, it is so fervent:

Remembir, Lorde, I have ben diligent

Evir the to plesse onely and no mo;

Myne herte is with the where so er I go.

511

Therefore, my dere darling! *trabe me post te*,
 And lette me not standin thus desolate;

Quia non est qui consoletur me,

Myne herte for the is so disconsolate,

My paines also nothing me moderate;

Nowe if it list the to speke with me' alyve

Come in hast; my herte asondir will rive.

518

To the I profir, lo! my pore service,

The for to plesse astir mine owne entent;

I offre' here, as in devout sacrifice,

My boxe replete with precious oyntment,

Myne eyin twaine weping sufficient,

Myne herte with anguishe fulfilled is, alas!

My soule eke redy for love out to pas.

525

G ij

Naught ellis have I the to plesse or pay,
 For if min herte were golde or precious ston
 It shulde be thine without any delay,
 With hertely chere thou shulde have it anone,
 Why suffrist thou me than to stande alone?
 Thou hast I trowe my weping in disdaine,
 Or els thou knowist nat what is my paine. 532

If thou withdrawe thy noble daliaunce
 For ought that evir I displeid the,
 Thou knowest right wel it is but ignoraunce,
 And of no knowlege for a certainte;
 If I have offendid, Lorde, forgive it me;
 Gladde I am for to make ful repentaunce
 Of all thing that hath ben to thy grevaunce. 539

Myne herte, alas! swellith within my brest,
 So sore opprest with anguifhe and with payne,
 That al to pecis forsothe it wol brest
 But if I se thy blyssid corse againe;
 For lyfe ne deth I can nat me refraine:
 If that thou make delay thou maist be sure
 Myne hert wol lepe into this sepulture. 546

Alas, my Lorde, why farest thou thus with me!
 My tribulacion yet have in miude;
 Where is thy mercy? wher is thy pite?
 Whiche evir I trustid in the to finde:
 Sometime thou were to me both gode and kinde;
 Lette it plesse the my prayir to accept,
 Whiche with my teris I have here bewept. 553

On me thou oughtist to have very routh,
 Sith for the onely is al this mourning,
 For sith I to the plightid firste my trouthe
 I nevir varyid with discording,
 And that knowist thou best my owne darling!
 Why constrainist thou me thus for to wayle?
 My wo forsothe can the nothing availe. 560

I have endurid without variaunce,
 Right as thou knowst, thy lovir just and trew,
 With hert and thought aye at thyn ordinaunce,
 Lyke to the saphire, alwaye in one hewe;
 I nevir woulde chaungin the for no newe:
 Why withdrawist thou the fro my presence,
 Sithins al my thought is for thine absence? 567

With hert intier, swete Lorde! I crie to the,
 Encline thine eres to my peticioun,
 And come *velociter exaudi me*;
 Remembre mine hert's disposicioun,
 It may not endure in this condicioun,
 Therefore out of these paines *libera me*,
 And where thou arte *pone me juxta te*. 574

Let me beholde, o Jesu! thy blissed face,
 Thy faire thy glorious angelike visage;
 Bowe thine eris to my complaint, alas!
 For to convey me out of this wode rage:
 Alas, my Lorde! take fro me this dommage;
 To my desire for mercy condiscende,
 For non but thou may my grevaunce amende. 581

Now yet, gode Lorde! I the besech and pray,
 As thou raifid my brothir Lazarous
 From deth to life, that upon the fourth day
 Came ayen in body and soule precious,
 As gret a thing maist thou shewe unto us
 Of thy self by powir of thy godhed
 As thou dyd of him lyinge in grave ded.

388

Myne hert is woundid with thy charite,
 It brennith, it flamith, incesfauntly;
 Come, my dere Lorde! *ad adiuvandum me*;
 Nowe be not longe, my paine to multiplie,
 Lest in the mene time I departe and die:
 In thy grace I put hope and confidence
 To do as plesith thy magnificence.

395

Flodis of dethe and tribulacioun
 Into my soule I sele entrid ful depe,
 Alas, that here' is no consolacioun!
 Evir I waile, evir I mourne and wepe,
 And sorow hath woundid myn hert ful depe:
 O dere love! no marvaile though that I die,
Sagitta tua infixæ sunt mihi.

602

Wandringe in this place, as in wildirnesse,
 No comferte have I ne yet assuraunce,
 Desolate of joye, replete with faintnesse,
 No' answere receving of mine enquirance,
 Myne herte also grevid with displeaunce,
 Wherefore I may saye, *O Deus, Deus!*
Non est dolor sicut dolor meus.

609

Myne hert expressith *quod dilexi multum*,
 I may nat endure although I wold faine,
 For now *solum superest sepulchrum*,
 I know it right wel by my hugè paine,
 And thus for love I may not life sustaine;
 But, o my God! I muse what aylith the,
Quod sic repente precipitas me.

616

Alas! I fe' it wil none othirwise be,
 Nowe must I take my leve for evirmore,
 This fore paine hath almost discomfite me,
 My love's corse I can in no wise restore;
 Alas to this wo that er I was bore!
 Here at this tombe nowe must I die and starve,
 Deth is aboutin my hert for to carve.

623

My testament I wol begin to make;
 To God the Fathir my soule I commende,
 To Jesu my love, that died for my sake,
 My herte and al both I gyve and ysende,
 In whose dere love my lyfe ymakith ende,
 My body also to this monument
 I here bequeth, bothe boxe and oyntement,

630

Of al my willes, lo! nowe I make the last;
 Right in this place within this sepulture
 I woll be buried whan I'am ded and past,
 And on my grave I wol have this scripture,
Here within restith a gosly cature,
Christ is true lovur, Mary Magdalaine,
Whose herte for love ybracke in pecis twaine.

637

Ye vertuous women, tendir of nature,
 Ful of pite and of compassion,
 Resorte I pray you to my sepulture
 'To singe my dirige with grete devocion,
 Shewe your charite' in this condicion;
 Sing with pite and let your hertis wepe,
 Remembring I am ded, am layd to slepe :

644

Than whan that ye begin to parte me fro,
 And endid have your mourning observaunce,
 Remembre where so evir that ye go
 Alway to serche and make due enquirance
 • Astir my love, mine hert'is sustinaunce,
 In every towne and in every village,
 If ye may here of his noble ymage ;

651

And if it happe by any grace at lasse
 That ye my trew love finde in any cost
 Say that his Magdaleine is ded and paste,
 For his pure love hath yeldid up the gost ;
 Say that of al thing I lovid him most,
 And that I ne might not this deth eschewe,
 My painis so fore dyd evir renewe.

658

And in tokin of love perpetual,
 Whan I am buried in this place present,
 Take out myne hert, the very rote and al,
 And close it within this boxe of oyntment,
 To my dere love make therof a present,
 Kneling downe with wordis lamentable
 Do your message, speke faire and trefable :

665

Say that to him my selfin I commende
 A thousand timis, and with herte so fre
 This povir token say to him I sende,
 Plesith his godenesse to take it in gre,
 It is his owne of right, it is his fe,
 Whiche he askid whan he said longe before
 Gye me thy hert and I desire no more.

672

Adue, my Lorde! my love so faire of face!
 Adue, my turtle dove so freshe of hue!
 Adue, my mirthe! adue, al my solace!
 Adue, alas! my Saviour Lorde Jesu!
 Adue, the gentillist that er I knewe!
 Adue, my most excellent paramour!
 Fairir than rose, swetir than lylly flour!

679

Adue, my hope of plesure eternal!
 My lyfe, my welth, and my prosperite!
 Mine herte of golde, my perle oriental!
 Myne adamant of parfite charite!
 My chese refuge and my felycite!
 My comforte and my recreacioun!
 Farewel, my perpetual salvacioun!

686

Farewel, mine emperour celestial!
 And most beautiful prince of al mankinde!
 Adue, my Lord! of hert moste lyberal!
 Farewel, my swetist bothè soule and minde!
 So loving a spouse shall I nevir finde!
 Adue, my soveraine, very gentilman!
 Farewel, dere herte! as hertely as I can.

693

Thy wordes eloquente flowinge in swetnesse
 Shal no more, alas! my minde recomforte,
 Wherefore my life must ende in bittirnesse,
 For in this worlde shal I nevir resorte
 To the, whiche was mine heviny disporte;
 I se, alas! it wol none othir be:

Nowe farewel, the grounde of al dignite!

700

Adue, the fairist that evir was bore!

Alas, I may nat se your blessid face!

Nowe welaway that I shal se no more

'Thy blessid visage, so replete with grace,

Wherin is printid my parfite solace!

Adue, mine hert'is rote and al for ever!

Nowe farith wel, I must from the discever!

707

My soule for anguishe is nowe ful thrusty;

I faint, I faint, right sore for hevines;

My Lorde, my spouse! *cur me dereliquisti?*

Sith I for the suffre al this distresse

What causith the to seme thus mercileffe?

Sith it the pleseth of me to make an ende

In manus tuas my spirite I commende.

714

Finis.

THE FLOURE AND THE LEAFE.

WRITTEN BY GEEFFERY CHAUCER.

The Argument.

700 A gentlewoman out of an arbour in a grove seeth a great company of knights and ladies in a dance upon the green grasse, the which being ended they all kneel down and do honour to the daisie, some to the Flower and some to the Leaf: afterward this gentlewoman learneth by one of these ladies the meaning hereof, which is this; they which honour the Flower, a thing fading with every blast, are such as look after beauty and worldly pleasure, but they that honour the Leaf, which abideth with the root notwithstanding the frosts and winter storms, are they which follow virtue and during qualities, without regard of worldly respects.

707 **W**HEN that Phœbus his chair of gold so hie
Had whirlid up the sterrie sky aloft,
And in the Bole was entrid certainly,
When shouris sote of rain descendid soft,
Caussing the ground felè timis and oft
Up for to give many an wholesome air,
And every plain was yclothid faire

714 With newè grene, and makith smalè flours
To springin here and there in field and mede,
So very gode and wholesome be the shours,
That they renewin that was old and dede
In wintir time, and out of every fede
Springith the herbè, so that every wight
Of this seson wexith richt glade and light; 14

And I so gladè of the feson swete,
 Was happid thus; upon a certain night
 As I lay in my bed slepe full unmete
 Was unto me, but why that I ne might
 Rest I ne wist, for there n'as erthly wight
 [As I suppose] had more of hertis ese
 Than I, for I n'ad sicknesse nor disese;

22

Wherefore I mervaille gretly of my self
 That I so long withoutin slepè lay,
 And up I rose thre houris aftir twelwe,
 About the springing of the gladsome day,
 And on I put my gear and mine aray,
 And to a plefaunt grove I gan to pas
 Long or the bright sonnè uprisin was,

23

In which were okis grete, streight as a line,
 Undir the which the grafs so freshe of hew
 Was newly sprong, and an eight fote or nine
 Èvery tre well fro his fellow grew,
 With braunchis brode ladin with levis new,
 That sprongin out agen the sonnè shene,
 Some very rede, and some a glad light grene,

33

Which [as me thought] was a right plefaunt sight;
 And eke the birdis songis for to here
 Would have rejoicid any erthly wight,
 And I, that couth not yet in no manere
 Herin the nightingale of all the yere,
 Full busily herk'nid with hert and ere
 If I her voice perceve could any where :

42

And at the last a path of litil brede
 I found, that gretly had not usid be,
 For it forgrowin was with grafs and wede,
 That well unnethis a wight might it se;
 Thought I, this path some whidir goth parde;
 And so I followid till it me brought

To a right plesaunt herbir wel ywrought, 49

Which that benchid was, and with turfis new
 Freshly turvid, whereof the grenè grafs
 So small, so thick, so short, so fresh of hew,
 That most like to grene woll wot I it was;
 The hegge also, that yedin in compas,
 And closid in allè the grene herbere,
 With sycamor was set and eglaterc

56

Within, in fere so well and cunningly,
 That every braunch and lese grew by mesure
 Plain as a bord, of an height by and by;
 I se nevir a thing [I you ensure]
 So well ydone, for he that toke the cure
 It for to make [I trowe] did all his peine
 To make it pass all tho that men have seine.

63

And shapin was this herbir rose and all
 As is a pretty parlour, and also
 The hegge as thick as is a castil wall,
 That who that list without to stond or go,
 Thogh he wold all day pryin to and fro
 He should not se if there were any wight
 Within or no, but one within well might

70

Perceve all tho that yedin there without
 Into the field, that was on every side
 Cover'd with corn and grafs, that out of doubt
 Tho one would fekin all the worldè wide
 So rich a feldè could not be espyde
 Upon no cost, as of the quantity,
 For of allè gode thing there was plenty.

77

And I, that all these plefaunt fightis se,
 Thought suddainly I felt so swete an air
 Of the eglenterè, that certainly
 There is no hert [I deme] in such dispair,
 Ne yet with thoughtis froward and contraire
 So overlaid, but it should sone have bote
 If it had onis felt this favour fote.

84

And as I stode and cast aside mine eye
 I was ware of the fairist medler tre
 That evir yet in all my life I se,
 As full of blossomis as it might be,
 Therein a goldfinch leping pretily
 From bough to bough, and as him list he ete
 Here and there of buddis and flouris swete.

91

And to the herbir side was adjoyning
 This fairist tre of which I have you told,
 And at the last the bird began to sing
 [Whan he had etin what he etin would]
 So passing swetely that by many fold
 It was more plefaunt than I couth devise;
 And whan his song was endid in this wise

98

The nightingale with so mery a note
 Answerid him, that alle the wode yrong
 So sodainly, that as it were a fote
 I stode astonied, and was with the song
 Thorow ravishid, that till late and long
 I ne wist in what place I was ne where,
 Ayen methought she song e'en by mine ere: 105

Wherefore I waitid about busily
 On evèry side if I her might se,
 And at the last I gan full well aspy
 Where she fate in a fresh grene laury tre,
 On the furthir side evin right by me,
 That gave so passing a delicious smell,
 According to the eglantere full well; 112

Whereof I had so inly grete plesure,
 As methought I surely ravishid was
 Into Paradise, wherein my desire
 Was for to be, and no ferthir to pas
 As for that day, and on the sotè gras
 I sat me down, for as for mine entent
 The birdis song was more convenient 119

And more plesant to me by many fold
 Than mete or drink, or any othir thing,
 Thereto the herbir was so fresh and cold,
 The wholsome favours eke so comforting,
 That [as I demid] sith the beginning
 Of the worldè was nevir seen er than
 So plesant a ground of none erthly man. 126

And as I sat the birdis herkening thus
 Methought that I herd voicis suddainly,
 The most swetist and most delicious
 That evir any wight I trow trewly
 Herdin in ther life, for the armony
 And swete accord was in so gode musike
 That the voicis to angels most were like.

133

At the last out of a grove evin by
 [That was right godely and plefaunt to sight]
 I se where there came singing lustily
 A world of ladies, but to tell aright
 Ther beauty grete lyith not in my might,
 Ne ther array; nevirthèless I shall
 Tell you a part, tho' I speke not of all:

140

The furcots white of velvet well fitting
 They werin clad, and the semis eche one,
 As it werin a mannir garnishing,
 Was set with emeraudis one and one
 By and by, but many a richè stonè
 Was set on the purfils out of dout
 Of collours, fleves, and trainis, round about;

147

As of grete perlis round and orient,
 And diamondis fine and rubys red,
 And many othir stonè of which I went
 The namis now; and everich on her hede
 A rich fret of gold, which withoutin drede
 Was full of statèly rich stonys set,
 And evèry lady had a chapelet

154

On ther hedis of braunchis fresh and grene,
 So wele ywrought, and so marvelously,
 That it was a right noble sight to sene,
 Some of laurir, and some full plefauntly
 Had chapèlets of wodebind, and sadly
 Some of agnus castus werin also,

Chaplets fresh; but there were many of tho 161

That dauncid and eke song full sobirly,
 But all they yede in maner of compace;
 But one there yede in mid the company
 Sole by herself; but all follow'd the pace
 That she kept, whose hevinly figured face
 So plefaunt was, and her wele shape person,
 That of beauty she past them everichone, 168

And more richly besen by manyfold
 She was also in every manir thing;
 Upon her hede full plefaunt to behold
 A coron of gold rich for any king,
 A braunch of agnus castus eke bering
 In her hand, and to my sight trewily
 She lady was of all the company; 175

And she began a roundell lustily
 That *Sus le foyle de vert* moy men call
Sine & mon joly cœur est endormy,
 And than the company answerid all
 With voicis swete entunid and so small
 That methought it the swetist melody
 That evir I herd in my life sothly. 182

And thus they all came dauncing and finging
 Into the middis of the mede echone
 Before the herbir where I was fitting,
 And God wot I thought I was well bigone,
 For than I might avise them one by one
 Who fairist was, who best could dance or sing,
 Or who most womanly was in all thing. 189

They had not dauncid but a little throw
 When that I herd not fer of sodainly
 So grete a noise of thundering trumpis blow
 As though it shoud have departid the skie,
 And astir that within a while I sie
 From the same grove where the ladies came out
 Of men of armis coming such a rout 196

As all men on erth had ben assemblid,
 On that place well horfid for the nonis,
 Stering so fast that all the erth tremblid;
 But for to speke of richis and stonis,
 And men and horse, I trow the large wonis
 Of Pretir John, ne all his trefory,
 Might not unneth have bought the tenth party. 203

Of their array whofo list to here more
 I shall reherse so as I can a lite.
 Out of the grove that I speke of before
 I se come first, all in their klokis white,
 A company that wore for ther delite
 Chapèlets fresh of okis serial
 But newly sprong, and trumpets were they all; 210

On every trump hanging a brode bannere
 Of fine tartarium, full richly bete,
 Every trumpet his lord's armis bere
 About ther neckis, with grete perlis sete,
 Collaris brode, for cost they wou'd not lete,
 As it would seem, for ther scochons echone
 Were set about with many a precious stone; 217

Ther horsis harneis was all white also;
 And aftir them next in one company
 Camin kingis at armis and no mo,
 In clokis of white cloth with gold richly,
 Chaplets of grene on their heds on hye,
 The crownis that they on their scotchons bere
 Were set with perl, and ruby, and saphere, 224

And eke grete diamondis many one;
 But all ther horse harneis and other gere
 Was in a sute according everichone,
 As ye have herd the forsaide trumpets were,
 And by seming they were nothing to lere,
 And ther guiding they did so manirly;
 And aftir them came a grete company 231

Of heraudis and pursevauntis eke,
 Arrayid in clothis of white velvet,
 And hardily they were nothing to seke
 How they on them shouldin the harneis set,
 And every man had on a chapèlet,
 Scotchonis and eke horse harneis in dede
 They had in sute of them that 'fore them yede. 238

Next after these appere in armour bright,
 All save their hedis, semely knightis nine,
 And every clasp and nail, as to my sight,
 Of ther harneis were of red gold so fine,
 With cloth of gold, and furrid with ermine,
 Were the tappouris of their sledis strong,
 Both wide and large, that to the ground did hong; 245

And every bos of bridle and paitrel
 That they had on was worth, as I would wene,
 A thousand pound; and on ther hedis well
 Dressid were crounis of the laurir grene,
 The best ymade that evir I had sene;
 And every knight had astir him riding
 Thre henchmen, still upon him awaiting; 251

Of which every (first) on a short trunchon
 His lord's helmet bore so richly dight
 That the worst of them was worth the ransoune
 Of any king; the second a shield bright
 Bare at his back; the thred barin upright
 A mighty spere, full sharp yground and kene,
 And ev'ry child ware of levis grene 259

A fresh chap'let upon his hairis bright;
 And clokis white of fine velvet they were,
 Ther sledis trappid and arayid right,
 Without difference as ther lordis were;
 And astir them on many' a fresh coursere
 There came of armid knightis such a rout
 That they besprad the large field about; 266

And all they werin, astir ther degrees,
 Chappèlets new, or made of laurir grene,
 Or some of oke, or some of othir trees,
 Some in ther hondis barin boughis shene,
 Some of laurir, and some of okis bene,
 Some of hawthorne, and some of the wodebind,
 And mány mo which I have not in mind. 273

And so they came ther horse freshly stirring
 With bloudy fownis of ther trompis loud;
 There se I many' an uncouth disguising
 In the array of thilkè knightis proud;
 And at the last as evenly as they coud
 They toke ther place in middis of the mede,
 And every knight turnid his horsis hede 280

To his felow, and lightly laid a spere
 Into the rest, and so justis began
 On ev'ery part aboutin here and there;
 Some brake his spere, some threw down horse and man,
 About the felde astray the stedis ran;
 And to behold their rule and govirnaunce
 I you ensure it was a grete plessaunce. 287

And so the justis last an hour and more,
 But tho that crownid were in laurir grene
 Did win the prife; their dintis were so fore
 That there was none agenst them might sustene,
 And the justing allè was left off clene;
 And fro ther horse the nine alight anon,
 And so did all the remnaunt everichone, 294

And forth they yede togidir twain and twain,
 That to behold it was a worthy sight,
 Toward the ladies on the grenè plain,
 That song and dauncid, as I said now right;
 The ladies as sone as they godely might
 They brakin off both the song and the daunce, 300
 And yede to mete them with full glad semblaunce :

And every lady toke full womanly
 By the hond a knight, and so forth they yede
 Unto a faire laurir that stode fast by,
 With levis laid, the boughis of grete brede,
 And to my dome ther nevir was indede
 A man that had sene half so faire a tre,
 For undirneath it there might well have be 308

An hundrid persons at ther own plesaunce
 Shadowid fro the hete of Phœbus bright,
 So that they shouldin have felt no grevaunce
 Neithir for rain, ne haile, that them hurt might;
 The favour eke rejoice would any wight
 That had be sick or melancholious,
 It was so very gode and vertuous. 315

And with grete rev'rence they enclinid low
 Unto the tre so sote and fair of hew,
 And astir that within a litil throw
 They all began to sing and daunce of new;
 Some song of love, some plaining of untrew,
 Environing the tre that stode upright,
 And evir yede a lady and a knight. 322

And at the last I cast mine eie aside,
 And was ware of a lusty company
 That came roming out of the feldè wide,
 And hond in hond a knight and a lady,
 The ladies all in furcotes, that richly
 Purfilid were with many a rich stone,
 And every knight of grene ware mantlis on, 329

Embroudid wele, so as the furcots were,
 And everich had a chapelet on her hed,
 [Which did right wele upon the shining here]
 Makid of godely flouris white and red,
 The knightis eke that they in hondè led
 In sute of them ware chaplets everichone,
 And before them went minstrels many one, 336

As harpis, pipis, lutis, and fautory,
 Allè in grene, and on ther hedis bare
 Of diverse flouris made full craftily,
 All in a sute, godely chaplets they ware,
 And so dauncing into the mede they fare,
 In mid the which they found a tuft that was
 All ovirsprad with flouris in compas, 343

Whereto they enclinid evèrichone
 With grete revèrence, and that full humbly;
 And at the last there tho began anon
 A lady for to sing right womanly
 A bargaret in praïsing the daisie,
 For (as methought) among her notis swete
 She said *Si douce est la Margarete!* 350

Then they allè answerid her in fere
 So passingly well and so plesauntly,
 That it was a most blisfull noise to here;
 But I n'ot how it happid, sodainly
 As about none the sonn so fervently
 Waxe hotè that the pretty tendir floures
 Had lost the beauty of their fresh collours. 357

Forshonke with hete the ladies eke to brent,
 That they ne wist where they them might bestow,
 The knightis swelt, for lack of shade nie shent,
 And astir that within a litil throw
 The wind began so sturdily to blow
 That down goth all the flowris everichone,
 So that in all the mede there last not one, 364

Save such as succoured were among the leves
 Fro every storme that mightè them assaile,
 Growing undir the heggis and thick greves;
 And astir that there came a storme of haile
 And rain in fere, so that withoutin faile
 The ladies ne the knightis n'ade o' thred
 Dry on them, so dropping wet was ther wede. 371

And when the storme was clene passid away
 Tho in the white, that stode undir the tre,
 They felt nothing of all the grete affray
 That they in grene without had in ybe;
 To them they yede for routh and for pite,
 Them to comfort astir their grete disese,
 So fain they were the helpleffe for to ese. 378

Than I was ware how one of them in grene
 Had on a coron rich and well-fitting,
 Wherefore I demid well she was a quene,
 And tho in grene on her were awaiting;
 The ladies then in white that were coming
 Towardis them, and the knightis in fere,
 Began to comfort them and make them chere. 385

The quene in white, that was of grete beauty,
 Toke by the honde the quene that was in grene,
 And seide, Sufir, I have grete pity
 Of your annoy and of your troublous tene
 Wherein ye and your company have bene
 So long, alas! and if that it you plesse
 To go with me I shall do you the esse 392

In all the plesure that I can or may;
 Whereof that othir, humbly as she might,
 Thankid her, for in right evil array
 She was with storme and hete I you behight;
 And evèry lady then anon right
 That were in white one of them toke in grene
 By the hond, which when the knightis had sene 399

In like manir eche of them toke a knight
 Clad in the grene, and forth with them they fare
 To an heggè, where that they anon right
 To makin these justis they would not spare
 Boughis to hew down and eke trees to square,
 Wherewith they made them stately firs grete
 To dry ther clothis, that were wringing wete: 406

And aftir that of herbis that there grew
 They made for bliftirs of the sonne brenning
 Ointmentis very gode, wholfome and new,
 Where that they yede the sick fast anointing;
 And aftir that they yede about gadring
 Pleafant faladis, which they made them ete
 For to refrefhe ther grete unkindly hete.

413

The lady of the Lefe then gan to pray
 Her of the Floure [for fo to my feming
 They should be callid as by ther array]
 To foupe with her, and eke for any thing
 That she should with her all her pepill bringe,
 And she ayen in right godely manere
 Thankith her fast of her most frendly chere,

420

Saying plainely that she would obay
 With all her hert all her commandement;
 And then anon without lengir delay
 The lady of the Lefe hath one yfent
 To bring a palfray aftir her intent,
 Arrayid wele in fair harneis of gold,
 For nothing lackid that to him long shold:

427

And aftir that to all her company
 She made to purvey horse and every thing
 That they nedid, and then full hastily
 Even by the herbir where I was fittig
 They passid all, so merrily fingig
 That it would have comfortid any wight:
 But then I fe a passing wondir ficht,

434

For then the nightingale, that all the day
 Had in the laurir sete, and did her might
 The whole service to sing longing to May,
 All sodainly began to take her flight,
 And to the lady of the Lefe forthright
 She flew, and set her on her hand softly,
 Which was a thing I mervail'd at gretly.

441

The goldfinch eke, that fro the medlar tre
 Was fled for hete unto the bushis cold,
 Unto the lady of the Flowre gan fle,
 And on her hond he set him as he wold,
 And plesauntly his wingis gan to fold,
 And for to sing they peine them both as sore
 As they had do of all the day before.

448

And so these ladies rode forth a grete pace,
 And all the rout of knightis eke in fere;
 And I that had sene all this wondir case
 Thought that I would assay in some manere
 To know fully the trouth of this mattere,
 And what they were that rode so plesauntly:
 And when they were the herbir passid by

455

I drest me forth, and happid mete anon
 A right fair lady, I do you ensure,
 And she came riding by her self alone,
 Allè in white, with semblaunce full demure;
 I her salued, bad her gode avinture
 Mote her befall, as I coud most humbly,
 And she answered, My doughtir, gramercy!

462

Madame, quoth I, if that I durst enquire
Of you, I wold fain of that company
Wit what they be that passed by this harbere.
And she ayen answerid right frendly,
My doughtir, all tho that passid hereby
In white clothing be servants everichone
Unto the Lefe, and I my self am one. 469

Se ye not her that crownid is (quod she)
Allè in white! Madame, then quod I, Yes.
That is Dian, goddess of Chastity,
And for bicause that she a maidin is
Into her hond the branch she berith this
That agnus castus men call propirly;
And all the ladies in her company 476

Which ye se of that herbè chaplets were
Be such as han alwey kept maidinhede,
And all they that of laurir chaplets bere
Be such as hardy were in manly dede,
Victorious, name which nevir may be dede,
And all they were so worthy of ther honde
In their time that no one might them withstonde; 483

And tho that were chapèlets on ther hede
Of fresh wodebind be such as nevir were
To Love untrue in word, in thought, ne dede,
But ay stedfast, ne for plesance ne fere,
Tho that they shulde ther hertis all to tere,
Woud never flit, but evir were stedfast
Till that ther livis there assundir brast. 490

Now, fair Madam ! quod I, yet woud I pray
 Your ladiship [if that it mightin be]
 That I might knowe by some manir of wey,
 Sithin that it hath likid your beaute
 The trouth of these ladies for to tell me,
 What that these knightis be in rich armour,
 And what tho be in grene and were the Flour, 497

And why that some did rev'rence to the tre,
 And some unto the plot of flouris fair ?
 With right gode will, my doughtir fair ! quod she,
 Sith your desire is gode and debonaire :
 Tho nine crounid be very exemplaire
 Of all honour longing to chivalry,
 And those certain be clept The Nine Worthy 504

Which that ye may se riding all before,
 That in ther time did many' a noble dede,
 And for ther worthinefs full oft have bore
 The crown of laurir levis on ther hede,
 As ye may in your oldè bokis rede,
 And how that he that was a conqueror
 Had by laurir alwey his most honour : 511

And tho that barin bowis in ther hond
 Of the precious laurir so notable
 Be such as were [I woll ye undirstond]
 Most noble Knightis of The Round Table,
 And eke the Doufeperis honourable,
 Which they bere in the sign of victory,
 As witnefs of ther dedis mightily : 518

Eke there be Knightis old of the Gartir,
 That in ther timis did right worthily,
 And the honour they did to the laurir
 Is for by it they have ther laud wholly,
 Ther triumph eke and martial glory,
 Which unto them is more perfite riches
 Than any wight imagin can or gesse;

525

For one Lefe givin of that noble tre
 To any wight that hath done worthily
 [An it be done so as it ought to be]
 Is more honour than any thing erthly,
 Witnes of Rome, that foundir was truly
 Of all knighthode and dedis marvelous,
 Record I take of Titus Livius.

532

And as for her that crounid is in grene,
 It is Flora, of these flouris goddesse,
 And all that here on her awaiting bene
 It are such folk that lovid idlennesse,
 And not delite in no kind besynesse
 But for to hunt, and hawke, and pley in medes,
 And many othir such like idle dedes.

539

And for the grete delite and the plessaunce
 They have to the Flour, and so reverently
 They unto it doin such obeisaunce,
 As ye may se. Now, fair Madame! quod I,
 [If I durst ask] what is the cause and why
 That knightis have the ensigne of honour
 Rathir by the Lefe than by the Flour?

546

Sothly, doughtir, quod she, this is the trouth,
 For knightes evir shoud be persevering
 To seke honour without feintise or flouth,
 Fro wele to bettir in all manir thing,
 In sign of which with levis ay lasting
 They be rewardid astir ther degre,
 Whose lusty grene may not appairid be,

553

But ay keping ther beauty fresh and grene,
 For ther n'is no storme that may them deface,
 Ne hail nor snowe, ne wind nor frostis kene,
 Wherefore they have this propirty and grace;
 And for the Flour within a litil space
 Wollin be lost, so simple of nature

They be that they no grevaunce may endure: 560

And every storme woll blowe them sone away,
 Ne they lastè not but for a sefon,
 That is the cause [the very trouth to say]
 That they may not by no way of reson
 Be put to no such occupacion.

Madame, quod I, with all mine whole servise
 I thank you now in my most humble wise;

567

For now I am ascertain'd thoroughly
 Of every thing I desirid to knowe.
 I am right glad that I have said, sothly,
 Ought to your plesure, (if ye will me trow.)

Quod she ayen. But to whom do ye owe
 Your service, and which wollin ye honour

[Pray tell me] this year, the Lefe or the Flour? 574

Madam, quod I, although I lest worthy,
 Unto the Lefe I ow mine observaunce.
 That is, quod she, right well done certainly,
 And I pray God to honour you advaunce,
 And kepe you fro the wickid remembraunce
 Of Malèbouch and all his cruiltie,
 And all that gode and well-condition'd be; 581

For here I may no lengir now abide,
 But I must follow the grete company
 That ye may se yondir before you ride;
 And forthwith as I couth most humily
 I toke my leve of her, and she gan hie
 Aftir them as fast as evir she might,
 And I drow homeward, for it was nigh night, 588

And put all that I had sene in writing,
 Undir support of them that lust it rede.
 O little boke! thou art so unconning,
 How darst thou put thy self in prees for drede?
 It is wondir that thou wexist not rede,
 Sith that thou wost full lite who shall behold
 Thy rude langage full boystously unfold. 595

Finis.

THE COURT OF LOVE.

581 WITH timorous herte and trembling hand of drede,
 Of cunning nakid, bare of eloquence,
 Unto the flour of port in womanhede
 I write, as he that none intelligence
 Of metris hath ne flouris of sentence,
 Saufe that me list my writing to convey
 In that I can to plesse her high nobley. 7

588 The blosomes fresh of Tullius gardein sote
 Present thei not, my mattir for to borne,
 Poemes of Virgile takin here no rote,
 Ne crafte of Galfride may not here sojourne;
 Why n'am I cunning? 'o wel maie I morne
 For lacke of science, that I can nat write
 Unto the princes of my lyfe aright! 14

595 No termes are digne unto her excellence,
 So is she spronge of noble stripe and high;
 A world of honour and of reverence
 There is in her, this wil I testifie:
 Caliope, thou sistir wise and fly,
 And thou Minerva! guide me with thy grace,
 That langage rude my mattir not deface. 21

The Court of Love] This book is an imitation of The Romaunt of the Rose, shewing that all are subject to love, what impediments soever to the contrary, containing also those 20 statutes that are to be observed in The Court of Love. Urry.

Thy sugir dropis swete of Helicon
 Distil in me, thou gentle Muse! I praye,
 And the Melpomene I cal anone
 Of ignoraunce the miste to chace awaye,
 And geve me grace so for to write and saie
 That she my lady of her worthinesse
 Accept in gre this litil short tretteffe,

28

That is entitlid thus, *The Courte of Love*;
 And ye that ben metrichiens me excuse,
 I you besече, for Venus sake above,
 For what I mene in this ye nede not muse;
 And if so be my lady it refuse
 For lake of ornate speche, I wolde be wo
 That I presume to her to writin so.

35

But my entente and al my busie cure
 Is for to write this tretteffe as I can,
 Unto my lady stable, true, and sure,
 Faithful and kind, sith firste that she began
 Me to accept in service as her man;
 To her be al the plesure of this boke,
 That when her like she may it rede and loke.

42

When I was yong, at xviii yere of age,
 Lusty and light, desirous of plesaunce,
 Approching on full sadde and ripe corage,
 Love artid me to do my observaunce
 To his estate, and done him obeisaunce,
 Commaundinge me *The Court of Love* to se,
 A lite beside the Mounte of Cithere;

49

There Citherea goddesse was and quene,
 Honourid highly for her majeste,
 And eke her sonne, the mighty god I wene,
 Cupide the blind, that for his dignite
 A M. lovirs worshipp on ther kne;
 There was I bid in paine of deth to pere
 By Mercury, the wingid messingere :

36

So than I went by strange and ferre countrees,
 Enquiringe aye what coaste had to it drewe
The Court of Love, and thidirward as bees
 At last I se the peple gan pursue;
 Anon me thought some wight was ther that knew
 Where that the *Court* was holdin ferre or nie,
 And astir than ful faste I ganne me hie.

63

Anon as I them ovirtoke I said,
 Heile, frendis! whithir purpose ye to wend?
 For soth, (quod one) that answered lyche a maid,
 To *Lov's Courte* now go we, gentil frend!
 Where is that place, (quod I) my felowe hend?
 At Citheron, Sir, faide he, withoute doute,
 The kinge of Love, and al his noble route,

70

Dwelling within a castil rially.
 So than apace I journid forth amonge;
 And as he faide so fond I there truly,
 For I behelde the touris high and stronge,
 And high pinaclis large of hight and longe,
 With plate of gold bespred on every side,
 And precious stones, the stone werke for to hide.

77

No saphire of Inde, no rube riche of price,
 There lackid then, nor emèraude so grene,
 Balis Turkis, ne thing to my devise
 That may the castil makin for to shene,
 All was as bright as sterres in wintir bene,
 And Phœbus shone to make his pece agcine
 For trespas done to high estatis tweine :

84

Venus and Mars, the god and goddesse clere,
 When he them founde in armis cheinid faste,
 Venus was than ful sad of herte and chere,
 But Phœbus bemis, streight as is the masse,
 Upon the castil ginnith he to cast
 To plesse the lady, princes of that place,
 In signe he lokith aftir Lov's grace :

91

For ther n'is god in heaven or hel iwys
 But he hath ben right soget unto Love,
 Jove, Pluto, or what so evir he is,
 Ne creäture in erth or yet above,
 Of this the revers may no wight approve;
 But furthirmore the castill to descrie
 Yet sawe I nevir none so large and hie,

98

For unto heaven it stretchith I suppose,
 Within and out depeintid wondirly,
 With many' a thousand daisy rede as rose,
 And white also, this sawe I verily,
 But what tho deisis might do signifie
 Can I not tel, fause that the quen'is floure
 Alceste it was, that kept ther her sojoure,

105

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Which undir Venus lady was and quene,
 And Admete kyng and soverain of that place,
 To whom obeied the ladies gode xix,
 With many' a thousand othir bright of face,
 And yong men fele came forth with lusti pace,
 And agid eke, ther homage to dispose,
 But what they were I coud not well disclose.

112

Yet nere and nere forth in I gan me dresse
 Into an halle of noble apparaile,
 With arras spred and cloth of gold I gesse,
 And othir filke of esyir availe;
 Undir the cloth of ther estate, sauns faile,
 The king and quene there sat, as I beheld;
 It passid joye of Helise the feld.

119

There saintis have ther cominge and resorte
 To seen the kinge so rially besene
 In purple clad, and eke the quene in sorte,
 And on ther heddis sawe I crounis tweine
 With stonis fret, so that it was no paine
 Withoutin mete and drinke to stand and se
 The king'is honor and the rialte.

126

And for to trete of statis with the king,
 That ben of counsell chese, and with the quene;
 The king had Daungir nere to him standing,
 The quene of Love Disdain, and that was sene,
 For by the faith I shal to God I wene
 Was nevir straungir none in her degre
 Than was the quene in castinge of her eye.

133

And as I stode perceving her aparte,
 And eke the bemis shininge of her eyen,
 Me thought they werin shapin lyche a darte,
 Sharpe and perlinge, smale, and streight as a line,
 And al her here it shone as golde so fine,
 Disshivil, crispe, doune hanging at her backe
 A yard in length, and southely than I spake: 140

O bright *Regina*! who made the so faire?
 Who made thy colour vermelet and white?
 Wher wonneth the god, how far above the eyre?
 Grete was his crafte, and grete was his delite;
 Now marvil I nothing that ye do hight
 The quene of Love, and occupie the place
 Of Cithare: now, swete lady! thy grace. 147

In mewet spake I, so that nought aserte
 By no condicion word that might be hard,
 But in my inward thought I gan adverte,
 And oft I said My wit is dul and hard,
 For with her beautie thus God wot I ferde
 As doeth the man yravishid with sight,
 When I beheld her cristal eyen so bright, 154

No respecte havying what was beste to done,
 Till right anone beholding here and there
 I spied a frend of myne, and that ful sone,
 A gentil woman, was the chambirere
 Unto the quene, that hote as ye shall here,
 Philobone, that lovid al her life;
 Whan she me sey she led me forth as blife, 161

And me demaundid how and in what wise
 I thithir come, and what my erand was?
 To sene the Courte (quod I) and al the guise,
 And eke to sue for pardon and for grace,
 And mercy aske for al my grete trespasse;
 That I none erste come to The Courte of Love
 Foryeve me this, ye goddis al above. 168

That is wel said (quod Philobone') in dede;
 But were ye not assomoned to appere
 By Mercurius, for that is al my drede?
 Yes, gentill seire! (quod I) now am I here.
 Ye, yet what tho though that be true, my dere?
 Of your fre wil ye shuld have come unsente,
 For ye did not I deme ye will be shente: 175

For ye that reigne in youth and lustines,
 Pampired with ese, and jalous in your age,
 Your dutie is, as far as I can gesse,
 To *Low's Courte* to dresslin your viage
Assene as Nature makith you so sage
That ye may know a woman from a swan,
Or whan your fote is growin halfe a span. 182

But sithe that ye by wilful negligence
 This xviii yere hath kept your selfe at large
 The gretir is your trespas and offence,
 And in your neck you mote bere all the charge,
 For bettir were ye ben withoutin barge
 Amidde the se in tempest and in rayne
 Then bidin here receving wo and pain 189

That ordeined is for soche as them absente
 Fro *Lov's Courte* by yeris long and sele;
 I ley my life ye shal ful sone repente,
 For Love wil reive youre coloure, lust, and hele,
 Eke ye must baite on many' an hevy mele:
 No force iwis, I flired you longe agon
 To drawe to Courte, quod litil Philobon; 196

Ye shal wel se how rough and angry face
 The king of Love wil shewe when ye him se;
 By myn advise knele down and aske him grace,
 Eschewing peril and adversite,
 For wel I wot it wolle none othir be:
 Comforte is none ne council to your ese,
 Why wil ye then the king of Love displese? 203

O mercie, God! (quod iche) I me repent,
 Caitife and wretche, in hert, in wil, and thought,
 And astir this shal be mine whole entent
 To serve and plesse, how dere that love be bought;
 Yet sith I have mine owne penaunce isought
 With humble spirite shal I it receive,
 Though that the king of Love my life bereve; 210

And though that fervent Lov's qualite
 In me did nevir worche truly, yet I
 With al obeisaunce and humilite,
 And benigne herte, shal serve him til I die;
 And he that lord of might is grete and hie
 Right as him list me chastice and correcte,
 And punishe me, with trespase thus enfecte. 217

These wordis said she caught me by the lap,
 And led me furth in til a temple round,
 Bothe large and wide, and as my bleffid hap
 And gode avinture was right sone I founde
 A tabiracle reifid from the grounde
 Where Venus sat and Cupide by her fide,
 Yet half for drede I can my vifage hide; 224

And eft againe I lokid and behelde,
 Seing ful fundry peple in the place
 And mistir folke, and some that might not welde
 Ther limmis wele, me thought a woundir case,
 The temple shone with windowes al of glasse
 Bright as the day, with manie' a faire ymage,
 And there I se the freshe Quene of Carthage, 231

Dido, that brent her beaute for the love
 Of fals Æneas, and the weimenting
 Of her Anelida, true as turtill dove
 To Arcite fals; and there was in peinting
 Of many' a prince and many' a doughty king
 Whose martirdom was shewed about the walles,
 And how that sele for love had suffrid falles. 238

But fore I was abashid and astonied
 Of al tho folke that there were in that tide,
 And than I askid where they haddin woned?
 In divers courtis, (quod she) here beside:
 In sondrie clothing mantilwise full wide
 They were arraied, and did ther sacrifice
 Unto the god and goddesse in ther guise. 245

Lo, yondir folke (quod she) that knele in blewe,
 They were the colour ay and evir shal,
 In signe they were and evir wil be true,
 Withoutin chaunge, and southely yondir all
 That ben in blak, with mourning crie and call
 Unto the goddes, for ther lovis bene
 Some ferre, som dede, som al to sherpe and kene. 252

Yea, than, (quod I) what done these preftis here,
 Nonnis, and hermites, freris, and all tho
 That sit in white, in ruffet, and in grene?
 Forsothe (quod she) they wailin of ther wo.
 O mercie, Lord! may they so come and go
 Frely to Court, and have soche libertie?
 Yea, men of eche condicion and degre, 259

And women eke, for truly there is none
 Excepcion made, ne nevir was ne may;
 This Courte is ope and fre for everichone;
 The king of Love he wil not say them nay;
 He takith al in pore or riche array
 That mekely sewe unto his excellence
 With al ther herte and al ther revèrence. 266

And walking thus aboute with Philobone
 I se where come a messengere in hie
 Streight from the king, whiche let commaunde anone
 Throughout the Courte to make an ho and crie,
 All new come folke abide; and wote ye why?
 The king's lust is for to seen you sone:
 Come nere; let se; his wil mote nede be done. 273

Than gan I me present tofore the king
 Trembling for fere, with visage pale of hewe,
 And many' a lovir with me was kneling,
 Abashed fore, til unto the time they knewe
 The sentence yeve of his entent full trew;
 And at the last the king hath me behold
 With sterne visage, and seid, What doth this olde, 280

Thus ferre ystope in yeris, com so late
 Unto the Courte? For sothe, my liege, (quod I)
 An hundrid tyme I have ben at the gate
 Afore this tyme, yet coude I ner espie
 Of myne acqueintaunce eny in mine eye,
 And *Shamefastnes* away me ganne to chace,
 But now I me submitte unto your grace. 287

Wel, al is pardoned, with condicion
 That thou be trew from hensforth to thy might,
 And servin Love in thine entencion;
 Swere this, and than as ferre as it is right
 Thou shalte have grace here in my quen's sight.
 Yes, by the faith I owe your crown I swere,
 Though Deth therfore me thirlith with his spere. 294

And whan the kinge had sene us everychone
 He let commaunde an officir in hie
 To take our faith, and shew us one by one
 The statutes of the Courte full besily:
 Anon the boke was leide before ther eye,
 To rede and se what thing we must observe
 In *Lov's Courte* till that we dye and sterve. 301

And for that I was lettrid there I red
 The statutes whole of *Lov's Courte* and hall.
 The firste statute that on the boke was spred
 Was to be true in thought and dedis al
 Unto the king of Love, the lorde ryall,
 And to the queene as faithful and as kinde
 As I coude thinke with herte, and will, and minde. 308

The seconde statute secretly to kepe
 Council of Love, not blowing every where
 Al that I knowe, and let it sinke and flete;
 It may not sowne in every wight's ere,
 Exiling flaundir ay for dred and fere,
 And to my lady whiche I love and serve
 Be true and kinde, her grace for to deserve. 315

The thirde statute was clerely writ also,
 Withoutin chaunge to live and die the same,
 None othir love to take for wele ne wo,
 For blinde delite, for earnest nor for game,
 Without repent, for laughing or for grame,
 To bidin stil in ful perseveraunce;
 Al this was whole the king's ordinaunce. 324

The fourth statute to purchace er to here
 And stirin folke to love, and betin fire
 On Venus auter here aboute and there,
 And preche to them of Love and hote desire,
 And tel how Love wil quitin wel ther hire;
 This must be kept; and loth me to displese
 If Love be wroth passe, for therby is ese. 329

The V. statute not to be daungirous
 If that a thought would reve me of my flepe,
 Nor of a fight to be ovir squemous,
 And so verely this statute was to kepe,
 To turne and wallowe in my bed and wepe
 When that my lady of her cruiltie
 Would from her herte exilin al pite.

336

The VI. statute it was for me to use
 Alone to wandir voide of company,
 And on my lad'is beautie for to muse,
 And to thinkin no force to live or die,
 And eft again to thinke the remedy
 How to her grace I might anon attain,
 And tel my wo unto my foveraine.

343

The VII. statute was to be pacient
 Whethir my lady joyful were or wroth,
 For wordis glad or hevy diligent,
 Whedir that she me heldin lese or loth,
 And hereupon I put was to mine othe
 Her for to serve and lowely to obey,
 And shewe my chere ye xx sith aday.

350

The VIII. statute, to my remembraunce,
 Was for to speke and pray my lady dere
 With hourelly labour and gret entendaunce
 Me for to love with al her herte entere,
 And me desire and make me joyful chere,
 Right as she is surmouning every faire,
 Of beautie wel, and gentil, debonaire.

357

The IX. statute, with lettris writ of golde,
 This was the sentence, how that I and al
 Shulde evir dred to be to ovirbolde
 Her to displese, and truly so I shal,
 But ben content for all thing that may fal,
 And mekely take her chastisement and yerde,
 And to offende her evir ben aferde.

364

The X. statute was egally to' discerne
 Betwene the lady' and thine abilite,
 And thinke thy selfe arte nevir like to yerne
 By right her mercy nor of equite,
 But of her grace and womanly pite,
 For though thy selfe be noble in thy strene
 A thousande folde more nobil is thy quene.

371

Thy liv'is lady and thy soveraine,
 That hath thin herte all whole in govirnaunce,
 Thou maieft no wise it takin to disdaine
 To put the humblie at her ordinaunce,
 And give her fre the reine of her plesaunce,
 For *Libertie is thing that women loke,*
 And truely els the mattir is acroke.

378

The XI. statute thy signis for to knowe
 With eye and fingir, and with smilis softe,
 And lowe to couche, and alwaie for to showe
 For drede of spyis for to winkin ofte,
 But secretly to bryng a sigh alofte,
 And eke beware of ovir moche resorte,
 For that para'venture spillith all thy sport.

385

The XII. statute remembir to observe,
 For all the paine thou hast for love and wo
 All is to lite her mercie to deserve;
 Thou musten then thinke wher er thou ride or go,
 And mortall woundis suffre thou also,
 All for her sake, and thinke it well besette
 Upon thy love, for it maie not be better. 392

The XIII. statute whilome is to thinke
 What thing maie best thy ladie like and please,
 And in thine hert'is botome let it sinke;
 Some thing devise, and take for it thine ese,
 And sende it her, that maie her herte appease,
 Some herte or ryng, or lettir or devise,
 Or precions stone; but spare not for no price. 399

The XIV. statute eke thou shalt assaie
 Firmely to kepe the moste parte of thy life;
 Wishe that thy ladie in thine armis laie,
 And nightly dreame thou hast thy nighte's herte's wife
 Swetly in armis, strainyng her as blife,
 And when thou seeest it is but fantasie
 Se that thou sing not ovir merily; 406

For *To moche joye hath ofte a wofull ende;*
 It longith eke, this statute for to holde,
 To deme thy ladie evirmore thy frende,
 And thinke thy self in no wise aocolde;
 In every thyng she doeth but as she should:
 Construe the best, beleve no talis newe,
 For *Many a lye is tolde that semeth fell true;* 413

But thinke that she, so bounteous and faire,
 Coud not be false; imagine this algate;
 And think that tonges wickid would her appaire,
 Slanderyng her name and worshipfull estate,
 And lovirs true to settin at debate;
 And though thou seest a faute right at thine eye
 Excuse it blive, and glose it pretilie. 420

The XV. statute use to swere and stare,
 And counterfeite a lesyng hardily
 To save thy ladie's honour every whare,
 And put thy self to fightin boldily;
 Saie she is gode, vertuous, and ghostly,
 Clere of entent, and herte, and thought, and will;
 And argue not for reson ne for skill 427

Againe thy ladie's plesure ne entent,
 For Love will not be counterpleted in dede;
 Saie as she saieth, then shalt thou not be shent,
The crowe is white. Ye, truly so I rede.
 And aye what thing that she the will forbede
 Eschue all that, and give her soverainte;
 Her appetite folowe in all degre. 434

The XVI. statute kepe it if thou maie,
 Seven sith at night, thy ladie for to plesse,
 And seven at midnight, se'ven at morow daie,
 And drinke a caudill erely for thine ese:
 Doe this, and kepe thine hedde from all difese,
 And winne the garlande here of lovirs all
 That evir came in Court or evir shall. 441

Full fewe think I this statute hold and kepe,
 But truely this my reson giveth me fele
 That some lovirs should rather fall aslepe
 Then take on hande to plesse so oft and wele :
 There laie none othe to this statute adele,
 But kepe who might as gave him his corage :
 Now get this garlande lustie folke of age ; 448

Now win who maie ye lustie folke of youth,
 This garlande fresh, of flouris red and white,
 Purple and blewe, and colours fell uncouth,
 And I shall croune hym kyng of all delite.
 In all the Courte there was not to my sight
 A lovir true that he ne was adrede
 When he expresse hath herd the statute rede. 455

The XVII. statute, when age approacheth on,
 And lust is laied, and all the fire is quent,
 As freshly then thou shalt begin to sonne
 And dote in love, and all her image paint
 In thy remembraunce till thou gin to faint,
 As in the first seson thyne herte began,
 And her desire, though thou ne maie ne can 462

Performe thy livyng actuell and lust.
 Registir this in thyne remembraunce
 Eke, when thou maist not kepe thy thing from rust
 Yet speke and talke of plefaunt daliaunce,
 For that shall make thyne hert rejoyce and daunce ;
 And when thou maiest no more the game assaie
 The statute bidde the praie for them that maie. 469

The XVIII. statute wholly to commend
 'To plesse thy ladie is, that thou eschewe
 With fluttishnesse thy self for to offende;
 Be joillife, freshe, and fete with thingis newe,
 Courtlie with manir, this is all thy due,
 Gentill of porte, and lovyng clenlinesse;
 This is the thing that likith thy maistresse; 476

And not to wandir liche a dullid asse,
 Raggid and torne, disguisid in araie,
 Ribaude in speche, or out of mesure passe,
 Thy bounde excedyng; thinke on this alwaie,
 For *Women ben of tendir bertis aye,*
And lightly set ther plesure in a place,
When thei misshinke they lightly let it passe. 483

The XIX. statute mete and drinke forgete,
 Eche othir daie se that thou fast for love,
 For in the Courte thei live withoutin mete,
 Save soche as cometh from Venus al above;
 Thei take none hede in pain of grete reprove
 Of mete and drinke, for that is all in vaine,
 Onely thei live by sight of ther souveraine. 490

The XX. statute, last of everichone,
 Enrolle it in thyne hert'is privite,
 To wring and waile, to turne, and sigh, and grone,
 When that thy ladie absent is from the,
 And eke renewe the wordis all that she
 Betwene you twain hath said, and all the chere
 That the hath made thy liv'is lady dere. 497

And se thyne herte in quiete ne in rest
 Sojourne to tyme thou seen thy ladie este,
 But where she won, by south, or est, or west,
 With all thy force now se it be not leste;
 Be diligent till tyme thy life be reſte
 In that thou maieſt thy ladie for to ſe;
 476 This ſtatute was of old antiquite. 504

An officiſ of high auſthorite,
 Yclepid Rigour, made us ſwere anone;
 He n'as corrupt with parcialite,
 Favour, prayir, ne gold that clerely ſhone.
 Ye ſhall (quod he) now ſwerin here echone,
 Both yong and old, to kepe in that thei maie
 483 The ſtatutes truely all aſtir this daie. 511

O God! thought I, hard is to make this othe,
 But to my powir ſhall I them obſerve:
 In all this worlde n'as mattir halfe ſo lothe
 To ſwere for all, for though my body ſerve
 I have no might them wholly to obſerve.
 But herkin now the cace how it befell;
 490 Aſtir my othe was made, the trothe to tell, 518

I tournid levis, loking on this boke,
 Where othir ſtatutes were of women ſhene,
 And right forthwith Rigour on me gan loke
 Full angirly, and ſaied unto the quene
 I traitour was, and chargid me let ben;
 There maie no man (quod he) the ſtatute knowe
 497 That long to woman, hie degre ne lowe. 525

In secrete wise thei keptin ben full close,
 Thei soun echone to libertie, my frende;
 Plefaunt thei be, and to ther own purpose;
 There wote no wight of them but God and fende,
 Ne naught shall witte unto the world's ende;
 The quene hath yeve me charge, in pain to die,
 Nevir to rede ne seen them with myne eye: 532

For men shall not so nere of counsaill ben
 With womanhode, ne knowin of ther guise,
 Ne what thei think, ne of ther wit th' engine;
 I me report to Salomon the wise,
 And mightie Sampson which begilid thrise
 With Dalila was, he wot that in a throwe
 There maie no man statute of women knowe; 539

For it pera'venture maie right so befall
 That thei be bounde by Nature to disceve,
 And spinne and wepe, and sugre strew on gal,
 The herte of man to ravishe and to reve,
 And whet ther tonge as sharpe as swerde or gleve;
 It maie betide this is ther ordinaunce,
 So must thei lowlie doen ther observaunce, 446

And kepe the statute yevin them of Kinde,
 Of soche as Love hath yeve 'hem in ther life;
Men maie not wete wby turnith every wind,
 Nor waxin wise, nor ben inquisitife
 To knowe secrete of maide, widowe, or wife,
 For thei ther statutes have to them reserved,
 And nevir man to knowe them hath deserved. 553

Now dresse you forth, the god of Love you guide,
 Quod Rigour then, and seke the temple bright
 Of Citherea, goddes here beside;

Beseche her by the influence and might
 Of all her vertue you to teche aright
 How for to serve your ladies and to plesse,
 Ye that ben sped, and set your herte in ese; 560

And ye that ben unpurueied pray her eke
 Comforte you sone with grace and destinie,
 That ye may set your hert there ye maie like,
 In soche a place that it to Love maie be
 Honour, and worship, and felicitie,
 To you for aie. Now goeth by one assent. 567

Graunt mercie, Sir! (quod we) and forth we went
 Devoutly, soft and esie pace, to se
 Venus the goddes image all of golde,
 And there we found a thousand on ther kne,
 Some freshe and faire, some dedly to beholde,
 In sondrie mantils new, and some wer olde,
 Some paintid were with flamis red as fire,
 Outward to shewe ther inward hote desire. 574

With dolefull chere, full fele in ther complaint,
 Criéd, "Ladie Venus! rewe upou our fore;
 "Receve our billes, with teris all bedreint,
 "We maie not wepe, there is no more in store,
 "But wo and pain us frettith more and more;
 "Thou blissefull planet! lovirs sterre so shene,
 "Have routh on us that sigh, and careful ben; 581

" And punishe, ladie, greuously, we praie,
 " The false untrue with counterfeite plesaunce
 " That made ther othe be true to live or deie,
 " With chere assurid and with countinaunce,
 " And falsly now thei fotin Lov'is daunce
 " Barain of routh, untrue of that thei saied,
 " Now that ther lust and plesure is alaid.

588

" Yet este againe a thousande milion,
 " Rejoyfing love, ledyng ther life in blisse,
 " Thei saied, Venus, redresse of all division,
 " Goddes eternell, thy name heryed is,
 " By lovirs bonde is knit all thing iwis,
 " Best unto best, the yerth to watir wanne,
 " Birde unto birde, and woman unto man.

595

" This is the life of joye that we ben in,
 " Resemblyng life of heavenly paradise;
 " Love is exilir aie of vice and sinne,
 " Love makith hert'is lustie to devise;
 " Honour and grace have thei in every wise
 " That ben to Lov'is lawe obedient;
 " Love makith folke benigne and diligent,

603

" Aie steryng them to dredin vice and shame;
 " In ther degre it maketh them honourable,
 " And swete it is of Love to bere the name,
 " So that his love be faithfull, true, and stable;
 " Love prunith hym to semin amiable,
 " Love hath no faute there it is exercised
 " But sole with them that have all love dispised.

609

" Honour to the, celestially and clere
 " Goddess of Love, and to thy celsitude,
 " That yevest us light so ferre doune from thy spere,
 " Persyng our hertis with thy pulchritude;
 " Comparison none of similitude
 " Maie to thy grace be made in nodegre,
 " That hast us set with Love in unitie. 616

" Grete cause have we to praise thy name and the,
 " For thorough the we live in joye and blisse;
 " Blessid be thou, moste soveraine to se!
 " Thy holy Courte of gladnesse maie not misse;
 " A thousande sith we maie rejoyce in this,
 " That we ben thine with herte and all yfere,
 " Enflamid with thy grace and heavenly fere." 623

Musyng of tho that spakin in this wise
 I me bethought in my remembraunce
 Myne orison right godely to devise,
 And plesauntly with hert'is obeisaunce
 Beseeche the goddess voidin my grevaunce,
 For I loved eke, saufe that I wist no where,
 Yet down I set, and saied as ye shall here: 630

Fairist of all that evir were or be,
 Licour and light to pensife creature,
 Myne whole affiaunce and my ladie fre,
 My goddess bright, my fortune, and my ure!
 I yeve and yelde my herte to the full sure,
 Humbly beseechyng, ladie, of thy grace
 Me to bestowin in some blessid place. 637

And here I vowe me faithfull, true, and kind,
 Without offence of mutabilitie,
 Humbly to serve while I have wit and mind,
 Myne whole affiaunce and my ladie fre,
 In thilkè place there ye me signe to be;
 And sith this thing of newe is yeve me, aie
 To love and serve nedely must I obeie.

644

Be merciable with thy fire of grace,
 And fixe myne herte there beautie is and routh,
 For hote I love; determine in no place,
 Saufe only this, by God and by my trouth
 Troublid I was with slombir, slepe, and slouth,
 This othir night, and in a visoun
 I se a woman romin up and doun

651

Of mene stature, and semely to beholde,
 Lustie and and freshe, demure of countinaunce,
 Yong and well shap, with here that shone as golde,
 With eyen as cristall, fercid with plesaunce,
 And she gan stirre mine herte a lite to daunce,
 But sodainlie she vanishe gan right there;
 Thus I maie saie I love and wote not where.

658

For what she is ne her dwellyng I n'ot,
 And yet I fele that love distreinith me,
 Might iche her knowe, that would I faine God wot,
 Serve and obeye with all benignitie,
 And if that othir be my destinie,
 So that no wise I shall her nevir se,
 Then graunt me her that best maie likin me,

665

With glad rejoyce to live in perfite hele,
 Devoide of wrathe, repent, or variaunce,
 And able me to doe that maie be wele
 Unto my ladie with herte's hie plesauce;
 And, mightie goddes! through thy purviaunce
 My wit, my thought, my lust, and love, so guide
 That to thine honour I maie me provide 672

To set mine hert in place there I maie like,
 And gladly serve with all affection;
 Grete is the pain which at mine hert doth sticke
 Till I be sped by thyne eleccion;
 Helpe, ladie goddes! that possession
 I might of her have that in all my life
 I clepin shall my quene and hert's wife; 679

And in *The Courte of Love* to dwell for aie
 My will is, and doin the sacrifice,
 Daily with Diane eke to fight and fraie,
 And holdin werre, as might will me suffice;
 That goddes chaste I kepin in no wise
 To serve; a figge for all her chastite!
 Her lawe is for religiouse. 686

And thus gan finishe prayir, laude, and preice,
 Whiche that I yove to Venus on my kne,
 And in myne herte to pondir and to peice
 I gane anone her image freshe beautie;
 Heile to that figure swete, and heile to the,
 Cupide! (quod I) and rose and yede my weie;
 And in the temple as I yede I seie 693

A shrine surmountyng all in stonis riche,
 Of whiche the force was plesaunce to mine eye,
 With diamonde or saphire nevir liche
 I have none seen, ne wrought so wondirliche;
 So when I met with Philobone in hie
 I gan demaunde whose is this sepulture?
 Forsothe, (quod she) a tendir creature

700

Is shrinid there, and Pitie is her name;
 She sawe an egle wreke hym on a flie,
 And plucke his wing, and eke him, in his game,
 And tendir herte of that hath made her die;
 Eke she would wepe and mourne right pitously
 To seen a lovir suffre grete destresse;
 In all the Courte n'as none, as I do gesse,

707

That coud a lovir half so well availe,
 Ne of his wo the torment or the rage
 Askin, for he was sure withoutin faile
 That of his grief she coud the hete aswage;
 In stede of Pitie spedit hote Corage
 The mattirs all of Courte; now she is dedde
 I me reporte in this to womanhedde;

714

Forweile, and wepe, and crie, and speke, and praie,
 Women would not have pitie on thy plaint,
 Ne by that mene to ese thine herte convaie,
 But the recevin for ther owne talent,
 And saie that Pitie causith them consent
 Of reuth to take thy service and thy paine,
 In that thou maigest, to plesse thy soveraine.

721

But this is counsaill, kepe it secretly,
 (Quod she;) I n'olde for all the worlde about
 The quene of Love it wist; and witte ye why?
 For if by me this mattir springin out
 In Courte no lengir should I out of doubt
 Dwellin, but shame in all my life endry:
 Now kepe it close (quod she) this hardily. 728

Well, all is well: now shall ye seen, she saied,
 The fairist ladie undir sonne that is:
 Come on with me; demene you lich a maide
 With shamefast drede, for ye shall speke ywis
 With her that is the mirrour, joie, and blisse,
 But somewhat straunge and sad of her demene
 She is: beware your countinaunce be sene, 735

Nor ovirlight, ne rechelesse, ne to bolde,
 Ne malapert, ne rennyng with your tong,
 For she willi you obeisin and beholde,
 And you demaunde why ye wer hens so long
 Out of this Courte, without resort emong;
 And Rosiall her name is hote aright,
 Whose herte is yet yyevin to no wight. 742

And ye also ben, as I undirstonde,
 With Love but light avauncid by your worde;
 Might ye by hap your fredom makin bond,
 And fall in grace with her, and wele accorde,
 Well might ye thanke the god of Love and lord,
 For she that ye sawe in your dreame appere
 To love soche one what are thei then the nere? 749

Yet wote ye what? as my remembèraunce
 Me yevith now, ye faine where that ye faie
 That ye with Love had nevyr acquaintaunce
 Save in your dreame right late this othir daie;
 Why, yes parde, my life that durst I laie
 That ye were caught upon an heth when I
 Sawe you complain and sigh full pitoussly;

756

Within an herbir and a gardein faire,
 Where flowirs growe and herbis vertuous,
 Of whiche the favour swete was and the cire,
 There were your self full hote and amorous;
 Ywis ye ben to nice and daungirous;
 I would ye now repent and love some newe.
 Naie, by my trothe, I saied, I nevyr knewe

763

The godely wight whose I shal be for aye,
 Guide me the Lorde, that love hath made and me:
 But forthe we went into a chambre gaie
 There was Rosiall, womanly to se,
 Whose streamis, sotill perfyng of her eye,
 Mine hert gan thrill for beautie in the stounde;
 Alas (quod I) who hath me yeve this wounde!

770

And then I drede to speke, till at the laste
 I grete the ladie reverently and wele,
 When that my sigh was gone and ovirpasse,
 And doune on knees full humbly gan I knele,
 Besechyng her my fervent wo to kele,
 For there I toke full purpose in my mynde
 Unto her grace my painfull herte to bynde.

777

For if I shall all fully her discribe
 Her hed was rounde by compasse of Nature,
 Her here as gold, she passid all on live,
 And lillie forehed had this creature,
 With livelische browis, flawe of colour pure,
 Betwene the which was mene disseveraunce,
 From every browe to shewin a distaunce; 784

Her nose directid streight, and even as line,
 With forme and shape thereto convenient,
 In which the godis milkewhite path doth shine,
 And eke her eyen ben bright and orient
 As is the smaragde, unto my judgement,
 Or yet these sterres hevenly small and bright,
 Her visage is of lovely rede and white; 791

Her mouth is short, and shitte in litil space,
 Flamyng somdele, not ovir redde I mene,
 With pregaunt lips, and thicke to kisse percase,
 For lippis thinne, not fat, but evir lene,
 They serve of naught, they be not worth a bene,
 For if the basse ben full there is delite;
 Maximian truely thus doeth he write. 798

But to my purpose; I saie white as snowe
 Ben all her tethe, and in ordir thei floude
 Of one stature, and eke her breth I trowe
 Surmountith all odours that er i founde
 In swetenesse, and her body, face, and honde,
 Ben sharply slendir, so that from the hedde
 Unto the fote all is but womanhedde. 805

I holde my pece of othir thingis hidde;
 Here shal my soule and not my tong bewraie;
 But how she was arraied, if ye me bidde,
 That shall I well discovir you and saie;
 A bende of gold and filke full freshe and gaie,
 With her intresse ybroudirid full wele,
 Right smothly kept, and shynyng every dele; 812

About her necke a flower of freshe devise,
 With rubies set that lustie were to sene,
 And she in gowne was light and sommir wise,
 Shapin full wele, the colour was of grene,
 With aureat sent aboute her fidis clene,
 With divers stonis precious and riche;
 Thus was she raied, yet sawe I ner her liche: 819

For if that Jove had this ladie yseine,
 Tho the faire Calisto ne Alcmena
 Thei nevir haddin in his armis leine,
 Ne he had lovid the faire Europa,
 Ye, ne yet Danae ne Antiopa,
 For all ther beautie stode in Rosiall;
 She semid lich a thyng celestiall, 826

In bountie, favour, porte, and similineffe,
 Plefaunt of figure, mirrour of delite,
 Gracious to seen, rote of all gentilneffe,
 With angell visage, lustie, redde, and white;
 There was not lack, fause Daungir had alite
 This godely freshe in rule and govirnaunce,
 And somdele straunge she was for her plefaunce. 833

And truly sone I toke my leve and went
 When she had me enquirid what I was,
 For more and more impressin gan the dent
 Of Lov'is darte while I behelde her face,
 And este againe I come to sekin grace,
 And up I put my bill with sentence clere
 That foloweth astir; rede, and ye shall here : 840

O, ye freshe lovelie ! of beautie the rote,
 That Nature hath formid so wele, and made
 Princes and quene, and ye that maie do bote
 Of all my langoure with your wordis glad,
 Ye woundid me, ye made me wo bestad;
 Of grace redresse my mortall grese, as ye
 Of all my harme the very caucir be. 847

Now am I caught, and unware sodainly,
 With persaunt stremis of your eyin clere,
 Subjecte to ben and servin you mekely,
 And all your man, ywis, my ladie dere!
 Abidyng grace, of whiche I you requere,
 That mercilesse ye cause me not to sterue,
 But guerdon me liche as I maie deserve : 854

For by my trothe the dayis of my breth
 I am and will be your in will and herte,
 Patient and meke for you to suffir deth
 If it require; now rue upon my my smerte;
 And this I swere, I never shall out sterre
 From Lov'is Courte for none adversitie,
 So ye would rue on my distresse and me. 861

M ij

My destinie, my fate, and houre, I blisse,
 That have me set to ben obedient
 Onely to you, the floure of all ywis;
 I trust to Venus nevir to repent,
 For evir redy, glad, and diligent,
 Ye shall me finde in service to your grace
 Till deth my life out of my bodie rase. 868

Humble unto your excellence so digne,
 Enforcing aye my wittis and delite
 To serve and plese with glad herte and benigne,
 And ben as Troilus, Troie's worthie knight,
 Or Antonie for Cleopatra bright,
 And nevir you me thinkis to renay;
 Thus shall I kepe unto myne endyng day. 873

Enprint my speche in your memoriall
 Sadly, my princes, salve of all my fore!
 And thinke that for I would becomin thrall,
 And ben your owne, as I have faied before,
 Ye must of pitie cherishe more and more
 Your man, and tendir astir his deserte,
 And give hym corage for to ben experte : 881

For where that one hath set his herte on fire,
 And findith neithir refute ne plesaunce,
 Ne worde of comforte, Deth will quite his hire;
 Alas that there ne is none allegaunce
 Of all ther wo! alas the grete grevaunce
 To love unloved! but ye, my ladie dere!
 In other wise maie governe this matere. 898

Truly gramercie, frende! of your gode will,
 And of your profir in your humble wife,
 But for your service take and kepe it still:
 And wher ye saie I ought you well to' cherishe,
 And of your grefe the remedie devise,
 I knowe not why; I n'am acquaintid well
 With you, ne wote not sothly where ye dwell. 896

In art of love I write and songis make,
 That maie be song in honour of the kyng
 And quene of Love, and then I undirtake
 He that is sadde shall then full mery syng,
 And daungirous not ben in every thyng:
 Beseche I you but seen my will and rede,
 And let your answere put me out of drede. 903

What is your name? reherse it here I praie;
 Of whens and where, of what condicion,
 That ye ben of: let se; come of and saie;
 Faine would I knowe your disposicion:
 Ye have put on your old entencion,
 But whate ye mene to serve me I ne wote,
 Saufe that ye saie ye love me woundir hote. 910

My name, alas my herte! why makes thou straunge?
 Philogenet I cal'd am ferre and nere,
 Of Cambrige clerke, that nevir thinke to chaunge
 Fro you, that with your heavenly stremis clere
 Ravishe myne herte and ghost, and all in fere:
 Since at the first I write my bill for grace
 Me thinke I se some mercie in your face. 917

And what I mene, by God that al hath wrought,
 My bille now makith finall mencion,
 That ye ben ladie in myne inward thought
 Of all myne herte withoutin offencion,
 That I beste love, and have sith I begon
 To drawe to Courte; lo then what might I saie?

I yelde me here unto your high nobleye; 914

And if that I offende, or wilfully
 By pompe of herte your precept disobaie,
 Or doen againe your wille unskilfully,
 Or grevin you for earnest or for plaie,
 Correſte ye me right ſharply then I praie,
 As it is ſeen unto your womanhede,
 And rewe on me, or els I n'am but dede. 931

Naie, God forbede to ſeſſe you ſo with grace,
 And for a word of ſugrid eloquence
 To have compaſſion in ſo lityl ſpace!
 Then were it tyme that ſome of us wer hens;
 Ye ſhall not finde in me ſoche inſolence:
 Aye, what is this! maie ye not ſuffre ſight?
 How maie ye loke upon the candill light, 938

That clere is and hottir then is myne eye?
 And yet ye ſaied the bemis perſe and frete,
 How ſhall ye then the candill light endrie?
 For well wotte ye that hath the ſharpir hete:
 And there ye bidde me you correſt and bete
 If ye offende; naie, that maie not be doen;
 There come but ſew that ſpedin here ſo ſone. 945

Withdrowe your eye, withdrowe from presenseke;
 Hurte not your self through folly with a loke;
 I would be sory so to make you sicke;
 A woman should beware eke whom she toke:
 Ye beth a clerke, go ferchin wel my boke
 If any women ben so light to winne:

Naie': abide a while tho ye were all my kinne; 952

So sone ye maie not win myne hert in truth;
 The guise of Court will seen your stedfastnesse,
 And as you doen to have upon you reuth;
 Your owne deserte and lowly gentilnesse
 That will reward you joye for hevinessse,
 And tho ye waxin pale, and grene, and dede,
 Ye muste it use a while withoutin drede, 959

And it accept, and grutchin in no wise:
 But whereas ye me hastily desire
 To bene to love, me thinke ye be not wise;
 Cese of your language, cese I you requere,
 For he that hath this xx yere bene here
 May nat optaine; than marvaile I that ye
 Be now so bold of love to trete with me. 966

A, mercy, hert! my lady and my love,
 My rightwise princeesse and my lyv'is guide!
 Nowe may I plein to Venus al above
 That routhles ye me gave this wounde so wide:
 What have I done? why may it not betide
 That for my trouthe I may receivid be?
 Alas than your daungir and crueltie! 973

In woful houre I gote was, welawey!
 In woful hour fostirid and yfedde,
 In woful hour yborne, that I ne may
 My suplicacion swetely have yspedde;
 The frosty grave and cold muste be my bedde
 Withoute ye list your grace and mercy shewe,
 Death with his axe so faste on me doth hewe. 980

So grete difese and in so litil while,
 So litil joy that felte I nevir yet,
 And at my wo Fortune ginnith to smyle,
 That nevir erst I felte so harde a fitte;
 Confoundid ben my spirites and my witte
 Til that my lady take me to her cure
 Whiche I love beste of erthely creature. 987

But that I like that may I not come by,
 Of that I plain that have I habondaunce;
 Sorowe and thought they sit me wondir nye;
 Me is withhold that might be my plesaunce;
 Yet turne again my worldly suffisaunce,
 O lady bright! and sause your faithful truc,
 And or I die yet ones upon me rewe. 994

With that I fell in sounde and dede as stonē,
 With coloure flaine and wanne as ashē pale,
 And by the hande she caught me up anon;
 Arise! (quod she) what, have ye dronkin dwale?
 Why slepin ye? it is no nitirtale.
 Now mercy, swete! (quod I) iwis affraied. 1000
 What thing (quod she) hath made you so dismaied?

Now wote I wel that ye a lovir be,
 Your hew is witnesse in this thing, she said;
 Yf ye were secrete ye might knowe (quod she)
 Curteise and kinde all this shuld be aleide;
 And now, myne herte! al that I have misseid
 I shal amend, and set your herte in ese.
 That worde it is (quod I) that doth me plesse. 1008

But this I charge, that ye the stentis kepe,
 And breke them not for sloth nor ignoraunce;
 With that she gan to smile and laughin depe.
 Ywis (quod I) I will do your plesaunce;
 The xvi statute doth me grete grevaunce,
 But ye must that releffe or modifie.
 I graunte, (quod she) and so I wil truly. 1015

And softly than her coloure gan appeire
 As rose so red throughout her visage al,
 Wherefore me thinke that it 'is according here
 That she of right be clepid Rosal.
 Thus have I wonne with wordis gret and smal
 Some godely worde of her that I love best,
 And trust she shall yet sette mine herte in rest. 1022

Goth on, she said to Philobone, and take
 This man with you, and lede him al aboute
 Within the Courte, and shewe him for my sake
 What lovirs dwel within, and al the route
 Of officirs, for he is oute of doute
 A straungir yet. Come on, (quod Philobone)
 Philogenet, with me now must ye gon. 1029

And stalking softe with esy pace I sawe
 Aboute the king ystondin environ
 Attendaunce, Diligence, and ther felow
 Forthirir Asperaunce, and many one,
 Dred to offende there stode, and not alone,
 For there was eke the cruil adversarye,
 The lovirs so, that cleped is Displeasure, 1036

Whiche unto me spake angrily and felle,
 And said, My lady me dissevin shall;
 Trowest thou (quod she) that al that she did tell
 Is true? nay, nay, but undir hony gall
 Thy birth and hers thei be nothing egal;
 Caste of thine herte for all her wordis white,
 For gode faith she lovith the but alite; 1043

And eke remembre thine habilite
 May not compare with her, this wel thou wot.
 Ye, than came Hope, and said, My frende, let be,
 Beleve him not; Dispaire he ginnith dote.
 Alas, (quod I) here is both cold and hote!
 The tone me biddith love, the todir nay,
 Thus wote I not what me is best to say; 1050

But wel wote I my lady grauntid me
 Truly to be my wound'is remedy;
 Her gentilnesse may not infectid be
 With doublenesse, thus trust I til I die;
 So cast I voide Dispairis company,
 And takin Hope to council and to frende.
 Yea, kepe that wel (quod Philobone) in minde. 1057

And there beside, within a bay windowe,
 Stod one in grene ful large of bred and length,
 His berd as black as fethirs of the crow,
 His name was Lust, of woundir might and strength,
 And with Delite to argue there he thinkth,
 For this was alway his opinion

That love was sinne, and so he hath begonne 1036 1064
 To reson faste, and ledge auctorite.

Nay, (quod Delite) Love is a vertue clere,
 And from the soule his progresse holdith he;
 Blinde appetite of Lust doth oftin stere,
 And that is sinne, for reson lackith there,
 For thou doest think thy neighbour's wife to winne,
 Yet thinke it wel that love may not be sinne: 1043 1071

For God and seint they love right verily,
 Voide of al synne and vise, this know I well;
 Affeccion of fleshe is sinne truly,
 But verray love is vertue, as I fele,
 For verray love may freile desire ackele,
 For love is love withoutin any sinne. 1050 1077

Nowe flint, (quod Luste) thou spekest not worth a

And there I left them in ther arguing, [pinne.
 Roning ferthir into the castil wide,
 And in a cornir Lier stode talking
 Of lesings fast with Flattery there beside;
 He said that women were attire of pride,
 And men were founde of nature variaunte,
 And coulde be false and shewin beau semblaunt. 1057 1085

Than Flatiry bespake, and said, Iwis,
 Se, so she goth on patins faire and fete,
 It doth right well; what pretty man is this
 That romith here? now truly drink ne mete
 Nede I not have, mine herte for joye doth bete
 Him to beholde, so is he godely freshe,
 It semeth for love his herte is tendre' and neshe. 1091

This is the Courte of lusty folke and glad,
 And wel becometh ther abite and arraye;
 O! why be som so fory and so sadde,
 Complaining thus in blak, and white, and gray?
 Freris they ben and monkis in gode fay:
 Alas for routh! gret dole it is to sene
 To se them thus bewaile and fory bene. 1099

Se how they crie and wring ther handis whit
 For they so sone went to religion,
 And eke the nonnes with vail and wimple plight
 Ther thought that they ben in confusion:
 Alas! they fain we fain perfeccion
 In clothis wide and lacke our libertie,
 But al the sinne mote on our frendis be: 1106

For Venus wote we wold as faine as ye,
 That bene attirid here and wel besene,
 Desyrin man, and love in our degre
 Ferme and faithful, right as ywold the quene:
 Our frendis wicke, in tendir youth and grene,
 Ayenst our will made us religious,
 That is the cause we mourne and wailin thus. 1113

Then saide the monke and freris in the tide,
 Wel may we curse our abbis and our place,
 Our statutes sharpe to sing in copis wide,
 Chastely to kepe us oute of Lov'is grace,
 And nevir to fele comforte ne solace,
 Yet suffre we the hete of Lovis fire,
 And astir othir happly we desire.

1120

O Fortune coursid! why nowe and wherfore
 Hast thou, they said, berafte us libertie,
 Sirhe Nature yave us instrument in store,
 And appetite to love and lovirs be?
 Why mot we suffer soche adversite
 Diane to serve and Venus to refuse?
 Ful ostin sythe this matier doth us muse.

1127

We serve and honour sore ayenste our will
 Of Chastite the goddes and the quene;
 Us lesir were with Venus bidin stil,
 And have reward for Love, and soget bene
 Unto these women courtely, freshe and shene.
 Fortune! we curse thy whele of variaunce,
 Ther we were wel thou revist our plesaunce.

1134

Thus leve I them with voice of plaint and care
 In raging wo cryng ful pitously;
 And as I yede ful nakid and ful bare
 Some I beholde loking dispiteously,
 On Povirte that dedly cast ther eye,
 And Welaway they cried, and were not faine,
 For they ne might ther glad desire attaine,

1141

For lacke of richesse worldly and of gode
 They banne, and curse, and wepe, and fain Alas!
 That poverté hath us hent that whilom stode
 At hert's ese, and fre, and in gode case,
 But now we dare not shew our selfe in place,
 Ne us embolde to dwel in company
 There as our hert wold love right faithfully. 1148

And yet againewarde shrikid every nonne,
 The pange of love so strainith them to crie;
 Now wo the time (quod they) that we be boun!
 This hateful ordre nise wil doen us die,
 We sigh and sobbe, and bleding inwardly,
 Freting our selfe with thought and hard complaint,
 That nye for love we waxin wode and faint. 1153

And as I stode beholding here and there
 I was ware of a sorte ful languishing,
 Savage and wilde of loking and of chere,
 Ther mantailles and ther clothis ey tering,
 And ofte they were of Nature complaining,
 For they ther membirs lackid fote and hand,
 With visage wry, and blinde I undirstand. 1162

They lackid shap and beautie to preferre
 Them self in love, and said that God and Kind
 Hath forgid them to worshipping the sterre
 Venus the bright, and lestin al behinde
 His othir werkis clene and oute of minde,
 For othir have ther full shappe and beautie,
 And we (quod they) ben in deformite. 1167

And nye to them there was a company
 That have the Sustirs waried and mislaide,
 I mene the thre of fatall Destine,
 That be our werdis; sodenly abraide
 Oute gan they crie as they had ben affraied,
 We curse (quod they) that evir hath Nature
 Yformid us this wofull life to' endure. 1176

And there he was contrite and gan repent,
 Confessing whole the wounde that Cithere
 Hath with the darte of hote desire him sent,
 And howe that he to Love muste subject be,
 Than heid he al his skornis vanite,
 And said that lovirs lede a blissid life, 1183
 Yong men and olde, and widowe, maid, and wife.

Bereve me, goddesse, (quod he) of thy might
 My skornis al and skoffis that I have,
 No powir for to mockin any wight
 That in thy service dwel, for I did rave,
 This knowe I wel right now, so God me save,
 And I shal be the chief post of thy faith,
 And love uphold, the revers who so faith. 1190

Dissemble stode not ferre from him in trouth,
 With party mantil, party hode and hose,
 And said he had upon his lady routh,
 And thus he wound him in and gan to glose,
 Of his entent full double I suppose,
 And al the worlde he said he loved it wele,
 But ay me thought he loved her nere adele. 1197

Eke *Shamefastnesse* was there, as I toke hede,
 That blusht rede, and darst nat ben aknowe
 She lovir was, for therof had she drede;
 She stode and hing her visage downe alowe,
 But soche a sight it was to sene I trowe
 As of these rosis rody on ther stalke,
 Ther coud no wight her spy to speke or talke. 1204

In Lov's arte so gan she to abashe,
 Ne durst not uttir al her privite,
 Many a stripe and many' a grevouise lashe
 She gave to them that woldin lovirs be,
 And hindered fore the simple comi'naltie,
 That in no wise durst grace and mercie crave,
 For were not she they nede but aske and have; 1211

Where yf they now aprochin for to speke,
 Than *Shamefastnesse* returnith them again,
 They thinke if we our secret counsel breke
 Our ladies wil have scorne on us certein,
 And perzaventure thinkin grete disdain;
 Thus *Shamefastnesse* may bringin in Dispeire;
 When she is dede the todir will be heire. 1218

Come forth Avauntir, now I ring thy bel;
 I spied him sone to God I make a vowe;
 He lokid black as fendis doth in hell.
 The firste (quod he) that evir did I wowe
 Within a worde she come, I wotte not how,
 So that in armis was my lady fre,
 And so hath ben a thousande mo than she 1225

In England, Britain, Spain, and Picardie,
 Artois, and Fraunce, and up in Hie Holande,
 In Burgoine, Naples, and in Italye,
 Navarre, and Grece, and up in Hethin lond;
 Was nevir woman yet that wolde withstond
 To ben at commaundement whan I wolde;
 I lackid neithir silver coigne ne gold: 1232

And there I met with this estate and that,
 And here I brochid her, and here, I trowe:
 Lol! there goeth one of myn; and wotte ye what?
 Yon freshe attirid have I leide ful lowe;
 And soche one yondir eke right wel I knowe;
 I kepte the statute whan we lay ifere, 1238
 And yet yon same hath made me right gode chere.

Thus hath Avauntir blowin every where
 Al that he knoweth, and more a thousande fold;
 His auncistrie of kinne was to Lier,
 For firste he makith promise for to hold
 His ladis council, and it not unfold,
 Wherefore the secrete when he doth unshutte
 Than lyith he that all the worlde maye witte. 1246

For falsing so his promise and behest
 I wondir fore he hath soche fantasie;
 He lackith witte I trowe or is a beste,
 That can no bette himselfe with reson guy;
 By mine advice Love shall be contrarie
 To his availe, and him eke dishonoure,
 So that in Courte he shall no more sojoure. 1253

Take hede (quod she this litil Philobone)
 Where Envie rockith in the cornir yonde,
 And sittith derke, and ye shal se anone
 His lene bodie, his fading face and honde;
 Him self he frettith, as I undirstonde,
 Witnesse of Ovide Metamorphosose;
 The lovir's so he is, I will not glose:

1260

For where a lovir thinkith him promote
 Envie wil grutche, repining at his wele;
 It swellith fore about his hertis rote,
 That in no wise he canne not live in hele;
 And if the faithful to his lady stele
 Envie will noise and ringe it rounde aboute,
 And sey moch worse than done is out of doute. 1267

And Privie Thought, rejoyfing of him selfe,
 Stode not ferre thens in abite mervilous;
 Yon is, thought I, some spirite or some else,
 His fotil image is so curious;
 How is (quod I) that he is shadid thus
 With yondir cloth, I n'ot of what coloure?
 And nere I went, and gan to lere and pore, 1274

And frainid him a question ful harde;
 Whate is (quod I) the thing thou lovist beste,
 Or what is bote unto thy painis harde?
 Me thinke thou livist here in gret unrest,
 Thou wandrist aye from south to est and west,
 And est to northe: as ferre as I canne se
 There is no place in Court may holdin the. 1281

Whom folowest thou? wher is thy hert iset?
But my demaunde afoile I the require.

Me thought (quod he) no creature may let
Me to ben here and where as I desire,

For whare as Absence hath done out the fire
My mery thought it kindeleth yet againe,

That bodily me thinke with my soveraine 1288

I stand, and speke, and laugh, and kisse, and halfe,
So that my thought comfortith me ful oft;

I think, God wote, though al the world be false

I wil be true; I thinke also howe softe

My lady is in speche, and this on lost

Bringith mine herte with joie and gret gladnesse,

This privey thought alaieth mine hevinesse. 1295

And whate I thinke or where to be no man

In al this erthe can tel ywis but I,

Andeke there n'is no swalow swift ne swan

So wight of wing, ne halfe so yerne can flie,

For I canne ben, and that right sodenly;

In heven, in hell, in paradise, and here,

And with my lady whan I wil desire. 1302

I am of counfel ferre and wide I wote

With lorde and lady, and ther privite

I wotte it al, and be it hote or colde

They shall not speke without licence of me;

I myne in soche as sefonable be,

For firste the thing is thought within the hert

Er any worde oute from the mouth astarte. 1309

And with that word Thought bad farewell and yede;
 Eke furthe went I to sene the Court's guise,
 And at the dore came in, so God me spede,
 Twenty courteours of age and of assise,
 Liche high and brode, and as I me advise
 The Goldin Love and Ledin Love they hight,
 The tone was sad, the t'odir glad and light. 1316

Yes, draw your hert with all your force and might
 To lustinesse, and ben as ye have seid,
 And thinke that I no drope of favour hight,
 Ne ner had unto your desire obeide,
 Til sodenly me thought me was affraied
 To sene you waxe so dede of countinaunce,
 And Pite bade me done you some plesaunce; 1323

Oute of her shrine she rose from deth to live,
 And in mine ere ful privily she spake,
 Doth not your servaunt hens away to drive,
 Rosial, (quod she) and than mine hertè brake,
 For tendiriche, and where I founde moch lacke
 In your persone, then I my self bethought, 1329
 And saide This is the man myne herte hath sought.

Gramercy! Pite, might I not suffice
 To yeve due laude unto thy shrine of golde?
 God wotte I wold, for sith that ye did rise
 From deth to live for me I am behold
 To thankin you a thousand tymis tolde,
 And eke my lady Rosial the shene, 1336
 Whiche hath in comforte set mine herte I wene.

And here I make myne protestacion,
 And depely swere as mine powir to bene
 Faithful, devoide of variacion,
 And her forbere in angir or in tene,
 And serviceable to my world's quene
 With al my reson and intelligence,
 To done her honour high and revèrence.

1344

I had not spoke so sone the worde but she
 My sovèrain did thanke me hertily,
 And said, Abide, ye shal dwelle still with me
 Till seson come of May, for than truly
 The king of Love and al his company
 Shall holde his feste ful rially and welle;
 And there I bode til that the seson felle.

1351

On May-day whan the lark began to ryse
 To matins went the lusty nightingal
 Within a temple shapin hauthorn wise,
 He might not slepe in all the nyghtirtale,
 But *Domine labia* gan he crie and gale;
My lippis opin, lord of Love, I crie,
And let my mouth thy prising now bewrye.

1358

The egle sang *Venite* bodies al,
 And let us joye to Love, that is oure helth,
 And to the deske anon they gan to fall,
 And who came late he precid in by stelth,
 Then saied the faucon, our owen hertis welth,
Domine Dominus noster, I wote
Te be the god that donne us brenne thus hote.

1365

Celi enarrant, said the poppingay,
 Your might is told in heven and firmament,
 And then came in the goldfinche freshe and gay,
 And saied this psalme with hertely glad intent,
Domini est terra, this Latin intent
The god of Love bath yerth in govirnaunce,
 And than the wren gan scippin and to daunce; 1371

Fube Domine, O lorde of Love! I pray
Commaunde me wel this lesson for to rede,
 This legende is of al that woldin dye
 Martirs for Love, God yef the soulis spede,
 And to the Venus singe we oute of drede,
 By influence of al thy vertue grete,
 Beseching the to kepe us in our hete. 1379

The seconde lesson robin redebreste sang,
 Hail to the god and goddes of our lay!
 And to the lectorn amorily he sprang,
 Hail, (quod he) o thou freshe seson of May!
 Our monith glad that singin on the spray,
 Hail to the flouris rede, and white, and blewe,
 Whiche by ther vertue makith our lust new! 1386

The thirde lesson the turtill dove toke up,
 And therat lough the mavis in a scorne,
 He said, O God! as mote I dine or suppe
 This solishe dove wil gife us al an horne,
 There bin right here a M. bettir borne
 To rede this lesson, whiche as wel as he,
 And eke as hote, can love in al degre. 1393

The turtill dove said, Welcom, welcom May,
 Gladfom and light to lovirs that ben trewe,
 I thanke the lord of Love that doth purvey
 For me to rede this lesson al of dewe,
 For in gode soth of corage I pursue
 To sêrve my make tyll deth us must departe,
 And than *Tu autem* sang he al aparte.

1400

Te Deum amoris sang the thrustil cocke,
 Tuball him self the firste musician
 With key of armony coude not onlocke
 So swete a tewne as that the thrustil can,
The lord of Love we praisin (quod he) than,
 And so done al the foulis gret and lite,
 Honour we May in fals lovirs dispite.

1407

Dominus regnavit, said the pecocke there,
The lord of Love, that mighty prince is wis,
He is recevid here and every where.

Nowe *Jubilate* sang, what menith this?
 Said than the lynet, *Welcom lord of blisse.*

Oute sterte the owle with *Benedicite!*

What menith al this mery fare? (quod he.)

1414

Laudate sang the larke with voice ful shril,
 And eke the kight *O admirabile!*

This quire wil throw min eris pers and thril,
 But what? welcom this May seson (quod he)

And honoure to the lord of Love mote be,
 That hath this feste so solempne and so hie;

Amen said al, and so said eke the pie.

1421

And forth the cockowe gan procede anon
 With *Benedictus* ! thanking God in hast
 That in this May wolde visite them echon,
 And gladdin them al while the fest shal last,
 And therwithal a laughtir oute he brasle,
 I thanke it God that I shuld ende the song,
 And al the service whiche hath ben so long. 1428

Thus sang they al the service of the feste,
 And that was done right erly to my dome,
 And furth goth al the Courte both most and lest
 To fetch the flouris fresh, and braunch, and blome,
 And namely hauthorn brought both page and grome,
 With fresh garlantis, party blew and white,
 And than rejoyfin in ther grete delite. 1435

Eke eche at othir threwe the flouris bright,
 The prymerose, the violete, and the gold,
 So than as I beheld the roial sight
 My lady gan me sodenly behold,
 And with a trewe love plitid many' a folde
 She smot me through the very herte as blive,
 And Venus yet I thanke I am alive. 1442

Explicit.

THE REMEDIE OF LOVE.

This book, taken for the most part out of The Proverbs of Solomon, is a warning to take heed of the deceitful company of women.

THE PROLOGUE.

SEYNG the manyfolde inconvenience
Falling by unbrydlid prosperite,
Whiche is not temprid with moral prudence,
Nothing more welthie than in youth's frelte,
Moved I am bothe of right and equite
To youth's wele somewhat for to endite
Whereby he may himselfin safecondite.

7

And firste I note as a thinge most noyous,
And unto youth a grevous malady,
Amongis us callid love encombrous,
Vexyng alway yonge peple straungely,
Oftin by force it causith 'hem to dye,
And age is also turmentid by love,
I mene bineth the girdle' and not above.

14

Wherfore this werke, whiche is right laborous,
For age me nedith nat in honde to take,
To youthe me owith to be' obsequious;
Nowe I begin thus to worke for his sake,
Whiche may the fervencè of love aslake,
To the lovir as a mitigative,
To him that is none a preservative.

21

Volume XII.

O

That mighty lorde whiche that me govirneth,
 'Tis Youthe I mene, mesure if that I pace
 In every matir whiche that him concerneth :
 Firſt, as is behoveful, I wol aſke grace,
 And forthwithal now in this ſamè place
 Er I begin I wol yknele and ſay
 Theſe fewe wordis, and him of helpè praye : 28

Thou flouring Youth, whiche haſt the avauntage
 In ſtrength of body, in luſte, and beaute,
 Alſo a precelling haſte above Age
 In many' a ſinguler commodite,
 Howe be it one thing he hath beyonde the
 To thy moſt profite and gretiſt availe,
 Whiche ſhuld the conduit, I mene ſad counſaile. 35

And yet, gode lorde, of a preſumpcion
 I n'il deprave thy might and deite,
 I lyve but undir thy proteccion,
 I am thy ſubjecte, I were thy lyverie,
 For thou arte grounde of my prosperite,
 And freſhiſt flowir of al my garlande,
 My ſingu'ler aide, as I well undirſtande. 42

But as he that oweth his lorde beſt ſervice
 And entire ſaith, his honour to ſupporte,
 Right ſo I ſpeke, and in none othir wiſe;
 I knowlege my ſelf one of the leſt forte
 Of thy ſervauntes, to our eldirs comforte,
 Drawe ſadde counſaile unto the if thou liſte,
 The and thy powir who maie then reſiſte ? 49

Fie on Age, I say, undir wordis fewe,
And his erroneous opinion !
What spekest of him whiche saieth moste untrue
All youth to be of ill disposicion ?
Dampnith us all without excepcion,
And for a colerable avauntage

He saieth in hym restith all counsaill sage. 56

Well sothly maie sadde counsaile in him rest,
But yet his dedis ben full ferre therefro;
He maie wel sayin with our parishe prest,
Doith as I saie and not as I do;

For I my selfin know wele one or two
Well strickin in age that for neighbourhedde
Ywollin to ther neighbours wivis bedde. 63

He will in presence of the yongè man
Her clippe and kisse, ye, and her doune ylaie,
And to blere his eye thus he sayith than,
O suffre yet olde Morell for to plaie,
Now have I doin that I can or maie :

Thus he sayith her husband for to queme,
That he nor no man shouldin not misdeme. 70

In worde nor dede nedith him not be coie,
It' is impossible that he doe amisse :
If the yong man speke, anon he saieth, Boie,
To rebuke age besemeth the not iwis;
And thus his olde face aye his warrant is;
All is in hym but sleight and subtilte,
And ferre from right reson, I tellin the. 77

O ij

And, shortly, Age is not abovin me;
 Age is impotent, and of no resilience;
 Age unweldie ne maie not fight nor fle;
 What werin Age withoutin my defence?
 Sad Counsaile saiest, Givith hym assistance;
 Right reson is freshist where that I ame,
 Wherefore in thy saiying thou art to blame.

84

Sith reson to me is rathir accompanied
 Then unto Age, whiche is the opinion
 Of every wise man not to be denied,
 And sith sad counsaile procedith of reson,
 Sad counsaile in me hath his chese macion;
 This is no naie; but what than is the ende
 Of this thy suasion; what doest entende?

91

Age to compare unto thyne excellence
 I n'ill presume hym so to dignifie,
 Ye be not egall, how be it Experience
 Hym avauntageth, for she moste certainly
 Hym techith what thing to hym is contrary,
 And ofte to fore se 'and warily eschewe,
 Whiche thou nevir assaidist yet nor knewe.

98

Experience makith a man moste certain
 Of thing ertly, and of necessite
 Sad counsaile requirith certaintie plain,
 So ferre to movin thus whereto nede we?
 But to my purpose, as thou commaundest me;
 Shortly mine entent is thus, and none other,
 Under thy licence to counsaile my brother.

105

How shouldist give any counsaile so yong,
 Lacking experience? unto thyne owne speche
 I report me, I wote as for thy tong
 Will serue the right wel, but than for to tech
 I doubte me leste that thy wit woll not rech;
 Youth and Experience thou saist be not convert,
 How shouldist thou then teche well unexpert? 112

Scripture witnissith that God will oft shitte
 Fro the' hie wittid man and shew it the child,
 To hym I mene that of his ownè witte
 Prefumeth not, but is debonaire and milde;
 By counsaile I entend vertue to bilde,
 Whiche of myne elders part have I borowed,
 And part of experience, which I' have sorowed. 119

Well, than, if it be as thou lettist fare
 Shewe forthe thy doctryne, be not ought agaste;
 I woll the supporte; loke thou doe not spare
 Maugre Age, although that he frete or gnaste;
 To aske Age counsaile herein were but wast:
 Boldely begin; go forthe to the processe;
 Fere not, firsins thou art of soche surenesse. 126

Graunt mercie, lorde! firsin it the doeth like
 To licence me, now I woll and dare boldly
 Assaile my purpose; with scriptures autentike
 My werke woll I ground, undirfet, and fortessie:
 Aspire my ginning, o thou wode Furie
 Alecto, with thy sustirs! and in speciall
 To the, mother of Jelousie, Juno, I call. 133

Explicit Prologus.

O iij

THIS werke who so shall se or yrede
 Of incongruite doe me not impeche;
 Ordinatelie behoveth me first to' procede
 In deduccion thereof, right as the leche
 His paciente's sicknes oweth first for to seche,
 The which knowen medicin he should aplic,
 And shortly as he can shape remedie.

Right so by counsail, willing the to' exhort,
 O yong man prosperous! which doth abounde
 In thy floures of luste, belongeth on the sort,
 Me first to confidir what 'is rote and ground
 Of thy mischese, whiche is plainlie yfound
 Woman, yfarcid with fraude and disceipt,
 To thy confusion moste allective baite.

Flie the miswoman lest she the disceve,
 Thus saith Salomon, which taught was fullie
 The falsshed of women in his daies to' conceive;
 The lips of a strumpet ben swetir than honie,
 Her throte souplid with oile of flatirie,
 How be it the ende and effecte of all
 Bitterer is then any wormwode or gall.

Flie the miswoman if thou love thy life:
 Beware of the straungir's blande eloquence;
 Straungir I call her that is not thy wife;
 Of her beautie have no concupiscence,
 Her countinaunce, pretendyng benevo'lence;
 Beware her signes and eye so amiable,
 Holde it for ferme thei ben discevable.

Lo, here an ensample what women be
 In ther signis and countinaunce shortlie!
 I woll shewin the how loviris thre
 Ylovid one woman right entirelie,
 Eche of them knewe othiri's maladie,
 Wherefore it was all ther daily labour
 Who coud approchin next in her favour.

35

At sondrie sasons, as fortune requireth,
 Severallie thei came to se her welfare,
 But ones it happinid Love them so fireth,
 To se ther ladie thei all would not spare;
 Of othir's comyng none of them were ware,
 Till all thei mette whereas thei in o place
 Of ther ladie sawe the desirid face.

42

To supprie set, full smallie thei coude ete;
 Full sobir and demure in countinaunce,
 There taried none of 'hem for any mete,
 But on his ladie to give attendaunce,
 And in secrete wise some signifaunce
 Of love to have, the whiche percevyng she
 Fetelie' executid thus her properte.

49

In due seson, as she alwaie aspid
 Every thyng to' execute convenientlie,
 Her one lovir first frendèlie she eyed,
 The second she' offrid the cuppe curtislie,
 The thirde she gave a tokin secretlie,
 Undirneeth the borde she trade on his fote,
 Through his entrailis tiklid the herte rote.

56

By your leve, might I here aske a question
 Of you my maistris that fewe lov'is trace,
 To you likely belongeth the solucion
 Whiche of these thre ystode now in her grace?
 Clerely to answer ye would aske long space,
 The mattir is doubtfull and opinable;
 To' ascertain you I woll my self enable.

63

Of the foresayid thre my self was one,
 No man can answer it bettir then I;
 Hertely of us bilovid was there none,
 But Watt'is packe we bare all by and by,
 Whiche at the last I my self gan aspie,
 And time as me thought then I lest the daunce:
 O thoughtfull hertè, gret is thy grevaunce!

70

Hence fro me! hence! that me for to endite
 Halpe aie here afore, o ye Musis Nine!
 Whilom ye were wont be mine aide and light,
 My penne to direct, my brain to' illumine;
 No lenger, alas! maie I sewe your doctrine,
 The freshe lustie metirs I wont to make
 Have ben here afore I' uttirlic forsake.

77

Come hither Erinnys, and ye Furies all
 Whiche ser ben undre' us nigh the nethir pole,
 Where Pluto reignith, o kyng Infernall!
 Sende out thine Arpies, send Anguisme and Dole,
 Miserie and Wo, leve ye me not sole,
 Of right be present must Pain and Turment,
 The pale Deth besemeth not to be absent.

84

To me now I call all this lothsome fort
 My paines t' encrese, my sorowes to augment,
 For worthie' I am to' be bare of all comfort,
 Thus sith I have consumid and mispent
 Not onely my daies but fivesolde talent
 That my Lorde gave me, I can not recompence,
 I maie n'ot to derely' aby my negligence.

91

By the' path of penaunce yet woll I revert
 To the well of grace, mercie there to fetch;
 Despisist not God the meke contrite herte,
 Of the cocke crowe, alas! I would not retche,
 And yet it is not late in the' seconde wetche;
 Mercie shall I purchase by 'incessaunt crying,
 The mercies of our Lorde er shall I syng.

98

But well mayist thou waile, wicked woman,
 That thou shuldest disceve thus an innocent;
 In recompence of my sinne, so 'as I can,
 To' al wol I make and leve this monument,
 In shewing part of thy falshed is myne entent,
 For all wère to moche, I cann'ot, well I wote,
 The cause shewith plainly he that thus wrote.

105

If al the yerth wer parchment scribable,
 Spedie for the hande, and all manir wode
 Wer hewed and proporcioned to pennis able,
 All water ynke eithir in damme or flode,
 Every man being a parsite scribe and gode,
 The cursidnesse yet and desceipt of women
 Coud not be shewid by the mene of penne.

112

I flie all odious resemblaunces;
 The devil'is bronde call women I might,
 Whereby man is encensid to mischaunces,
 Or a stinkyng rose, that faire is in sight,
 Or dedly' empoison, like the sugir white,
 Whiche by his swetnesse causith man to tast,
 And sodainly fleeth and bringeth him to' his last. 119

It 'is not my manir to use soche langage,
 But this my doctrine as I maie lawfullie
 I' woll wholly grounde with aucthoritie sage,
 Willing wisedome and vertue edefie:
 Wine and women into apostasie
 Cause wisemen to fall; what is that to saie?
 Of wisedome cause them to forget the waie: 120

Wherefore the wiseman doith the advise,
 In whose wordis can be founde no lesyng,
 With the straungir to sittin in no wise
 Whiche is not thy wife; fall not in clippyng
 With her, but beware eke of her kissyng,
 Kepe with her in wine no altercacion,
 Lest thyne herte fall by inclinacion. 121

Maie a man, thinkist, hide and safely laie
 Fire in his bosome without empairement
 And brenning of his clothes? or whider he may
 Walke on hotte colis his fete not ybrente?
 As who sayith naie, and whereby is mente
 'This foresaied proverbe and similitude,
 But that thou ridde the plainly to denude 122

From the flattirirs forgettyng her gide,
 The gide of her youth, I mene Shamfastnes,
 Whiche should cause her maidinhed to abide,
 Her Godd'is behest eke she full rechelesse
 Not retching committeth to forgetfulnes,
 Neithir God ne shame in her havyng place;
 Nedis must soche a woman lackè grace. 147

And all that neighin her in waie of sin
 To tourne of grace shall lacke the influence,
 The pathis of life no more to come in,
 Wherefore first frendè the with Sapience,
 Remembring God, and astir with Prudence,
 To thyne owne wele, that so thei may the kepe,
 Unto thyne hertè lest her wordis crepe. 154

In his boke where I take my mostè ground,
 And in his Proverbis, sage Salomon
 Tellith a talè which is plainly found
 In the fiveth chapter, whedir in dede don
 Or mekely seined to our instruccion
 Let clerkes determine, but this am I sure,
 Moche like thyng I my self have had in ure. 161

At my windowe, saieth he, I lokid out,
 Faire yongè peple where I sawe many,
 Emong 'hem all, as I lokid about,
 To a yong man fortunèd I lent myne eye,
 Estraungid from his minde it was likely;
 By the' strete at a cornir, nigh his own hous,
 He went about with eye right curious. 168

When that the daie his light began withdrawe,
 And the night approchid in the twilight,
 How a woman came and met hym I sawe,
 Talking with him undir shade of the night;
 Now bleffid be God (quod she) of his might,
 Whiche hath fulfillid myne hert's desire,
 Aslaked my painis, which were hote as fire. 172

And yet myne auethour, as it is gode skill,
 To folowe I must tell her araiment;
 She was full nice fouslis like to spill,
 As nice in countenance yet as in garmente,
 For janglyng she was of rest impaciente,
 Wandirynge still in no place she ystode,
 But restlesse now, and now out forthe she yode: 173

Now in the hous she was, now in the strete,
 Now at a cornir she standeth in awaite,
 Incessauntly busie her praie to gete,
 To bring to the lure whom she doith laite.
 Now where I left unto my mattir straite
 I woll tournin again, how she hym met,
 Swetily kissid, and frendly him grette. 174

With wordes of curtisie many and diverse,
 Right as in part I have before ytolde,
 Now as I can I purpose to reherse
 How she flattiring saied with visage bolde,
 I have made vowes and offringes manifolde
 For thy sake, o myne herte! o my love dere!
 This daie I thanke God all performid were; 175

Therefore I came out and made thus aſterte,
 Verie deſirous your welfare to ſe;
 Now I have ſeen you pleaſid is myne herte;
 In faith ſhall none yhave my love but ye;
 As true as I am to you be to me:

I pfaie you hertily, dere herte! come home,
 No man ſhould be to me ſo much welcome.

203

And in gode faith, the ſothè for to ſaie,
 Your comyng unto me ran in my thought:
 Harke in your ere; my beddè freſhe and gaie
 I have behanged with tapettis new bought,
 From Egypte and from far countries ybrought,
 Steined with many a luſtie freſhe hue,
 Excedyng golde or jaſpir in value:

210

My chambir is ſtrowed with mirre and inſence,
 With ſote fav'oring aloes and ſinname,
 Brethyng an aromatique redolence,
 Sarmountyng olibane in any man's dome;
 Ye ſhall bitwene my breaſtes reſt if ye come;
 Let us now have our deſired halfyng,
 For we maie ſafe be till in the mornyng.

217

Myne huſband is not at home, he is went
 Forthe in his journey a farre waie from hence,
 A bagge with money he hath with hym hent,
 As hym thought nedeful was for his expence;
 Unto my wordis give faith and credence;
 Now is the monè yong and of light dulle,
 Ere he come home it woll be at the fulle.

224

And thus craftily hath she hym besette
With her lime rodis, and pantir, and snare,
The felie soule ycaught hath in her nette,
Of her sugrid mouthe, alas! nothyng ware;
And thus is he left gracèlesse and bare
Of helpe, and comfort, and ghostlie succour,
And, furthirmore, as sayith myne auethour, 231

As a best ledde to his deth doith pante
This yong man folowith her in that stounde,
And as a wanton lambe full ignorante
How he is pulled and drawin to be bounde
Unto the tyme he hath his deth's wounde,
And like a birde that hastith to the grin,
Not knowyng the perill of' his life therein. 232

Now, gentle sonne, saith Salomon, take hede,
My wordis in thy brest kepe and make faste,
Let her not thy mynde in her waies mislede,
Be not decevid, lesith not thy taste,
Many hath she woundid, many doune caste,
Many strong men by her hath losse ther breth;
Her waies are waies of hell ledyng to deth. 241

And in this lite narracion precedente
The womanne's manifolde gilt I attende,
'The yongè man, alas, how she hath shent!
Discevid her husbände her own next frend;
In these bothe her God she doith offende;
'To breke her spoufail to 'her is of no weight.
Furdirmore to shew woman's craft and sleight, 242

A woman at her dore fate on a stall
 To se folke passe by stretes of the cite,
 With eye and countinaunce eke she gan call,
 If there be any pretie 'onè come to me,
 Come hithir ye pigges nye, ye little babe!
 At last she saied to a yong man hertlesse,
 Of her deceit unware and defencelesse, 259

Moche swetir, she saith, and more acceptable,
 Is drinke when it is stollin privily
 Then when it 'is taken in form avowable;
 Bread hiddin and gottin jeoperdouslie
 Ymust nedis be swete and semblablie;
 Venison stolin is aie the swetir,
 The ferthir the narowir fet the bettir. 266

And whom this woman, saith Salomon, festes
 The yong man wotith not whom she doth fede;
 Of the darke depenesse of hell ben her gestes;
 Beware, o yong man! therefore I the rede,
 And how be it chiefly for thy gode spede
 This werke to compile I have take in charge
 I must of pitie my charitie 'enlarge; 273

With the felie man whiche is thus begiled,
 Her husband I mene, I wol wepe and waile
 His painfull infortune, whereby reviled
 Causelesse he is, nevir to convaile;
 Every man yong and olde woll him assaile
 With wordes of occasion with the loth name,
 And, alas, gode soule! he nothyng to blame: 280

But she whiche that could so ill doe and wolde,
 Hers be the blame for her foule demerite,
 And leue that opprobrious name Cokcold
 To apropr to hym as in dispite:
 Ranfack yet we wouldin if that we might
 Of this wordè the true ortographie,
 The verie discent and etymologie. 287

The well and grounde of the firste invencion
 To knowe the' ortographie we must deriue,
 Whiche is Coke and Cold in composition,
 By reson as nigh as I can contriue,
 Then how it is writtin we knowe belive;
 But yet, lo! by what reson and what grounde
 Ywas it of these two wordis compounde? 294

As of one cause to give very judgement,
 The' etymology let us firste beholde;
 Eche lettir an whole worde doeth represent,
 As C put for Colde, and O put for Olde,
 K is for Knave; thus diuers men don holde:
 The firste parte of this name we have yfounde,
 Let us ethimologise the secounde. 301

As the firste findir mente I am right sure
 C for Calot, for Of we havin O,
 And L for Leude, and D for Demenure,
 The craft of the' enventour ye maie se, lo!
 How one name signifieth personis two,
 A Colde Olde Knave, Cokcold himself wenyng,
 And eke a Calot of Leude Demenyng. 308

The seconde cause of the' imposition
 Of this foresayd name was jelousie:
 To be jelouse is gretist occasion
 To be cokcold that men can wel aspie,
 And though the passion be very fire,
 And of continuell servence and hete,
 The pacient aye sufferith colde on his fete.

315

And who that 'is jelous and aye in a drede
 Is full of melancolie and gallie ire;
 His wiv' is nose if she onis mistrede
 He woll cutte of, ye, and he woll conspire
 His deth who evir that woll her desire,
 Whiche she percevyng brastith streight his gall;
 And anone his grete wodenesse doith fall.

322

As sone as she hath knit for hym that knot
 Now is he tame that was so ramagious;
 Mekely sittith he doune and taketh his lot;
 Layid ben now his lokes so furious,
 And he but late as a cocke batailous,
 Hote in his quarell, to avenge hym bolde,
 Now is he callid bothè Coke and Colde.

329

This faiyng, to' all curtisie dissonant,
 Whiche ysemith that it of malice grewe,
 In this rude tretise I ne woll not plant
 As parcill thereof, but onely to shewe
 The opinion of the talcatise shrewe,
 Whiche in ill faiyng is ever merie,
 No man as I is thereof so werie.

336

But I as parcill of this my lite boke
 Woll graffin in some sadde counsaill wherby
 The weddid man, if that he daigne to loke
 In it, the bettir shall mowin hym gie,
 And provide for his saied infortunie,
 Whiche as I have sayid with him complaine
 I woll, as partinir of his grete paine. 343

As moſte expedient unto his wele
 I woulde that all jelouſie were abjecte,
 If he be jelous that he it concele,
 And in his labour be full circumspecte
 To knowe her waies if thei ſemin ſuſpecte,
 And not for to breke, for one worde brokin
 She woll not miſſe but ſhe woll be wrokin. 350

Forbid her not that thou n'oldiſt have don,
 For loke what thyng ſo e're ſhe is forbod
 To that of all thyngis ſhe is moſt prone,
 Namily if it be ill and no gode;
 Till it be executid ſhe' is nigh wode:
 Soche is a woman, and ſoche is her fete;
 Her craft by craft than labour to defete. 357

If thou hereaſtir, now a ſingle man,
 Shouldiſt be jelous if thou haddeſt a wiſe,
 Wedde not but if thou can truſt a woman,
 For els ſhouldiſt thou lede a carefull life;
 That thou moſte lothiſt ſhould ybe full riſe;
 Yet I ne will gainſaie matrimonie,
 But *Melius eſt nubere quàm uri.* 364

That is to saie, Bettir is in wedlocke
 A wife to take, as the churche doith kenne,
 Then for to ben undir the flesh'is yoke,
 In fleshlie lustis alwaie for to brenne;
 But, as I sayid, for all jelous menne,
 So thei livin chaste, I holde it lasse ill
 That thei ne wedde not than them selfin spill. 371

The single man whiche that is yet to wedde,
 And not the weddid man, thus I arede,
 To warne hym now he is to farre yspedde,
 It is all to late hym for to forbede,
 But let hym take as for his ownè nede
 Seche counsaile as is hym before ytolde,
 These wordis folowyng eke to beholde. 378

Thy watir to kepe the wiseman doeth teche,
 That thou in no wise let it have issue,
 At a narowe riste waie it woll yseche;
 And semblablie the woman that 'is untrue
 To give her fre walke in all wise eschue;
 If she at large, not at thine handè, walke
 She woll the shamin, thou shalt it not balke. 385

Weddid or single thus saith the wiseman,
 Her which that both daie and night evirmore
 Lithe in thy bosome, wife or yet lemman,
 Love not to hote, lest thou repent it fore,
 Lest she the bryngin into some ill lore:
 Thy wife not to love yet I n'ill support,
 But that thou dote not thus I the exhort. 392

Lo! if thou love her love thine honestie;
 Be she not idill for what woll betide;
 If she sit idle' of very necessitie
 Her mindè woll serchin ferre and eke wide,
 Namelie if she be not accompanide:
 How accompanied? not with yongè men,
 But with maidinis I mene or women.

399

Maidin servauntes be right convenient
 In houle to helpin to doe her service,
 Inwhom she maie use her commaundement
 In the sefon all at her owne device;
 To techin 'hem gode yeve her thine advice
 To make them huswifis: thus businesse
 Maie yet refrainin her from idlenesse.

406

But bid not her that thou wolt have her do,
 Of thine entent that might be a lettyng,
 Eut craftily encourage her therto
 By othir menis, as by commendying,
 And not to moche, but duily mengying
 Bothe praise and blamè, and in thy reson
 First praise wisely the place and sefon.

413

Of faithfull will and hertè full tender
 One thing I call into remembèraunce
 Again, whiche though my wit be to slender
 Astir my powir and my suffisaunce
 I purpose to makin a purveiaunce,
 Sith women of nature ben chaungeable,
 Frele, and not ware, also discevable.

420

Be' it that thy wife be excellently gode,
That none be bet of disposicion,
In processe of time she might turn her mode
By some misse-liver's instigacion;
Divers men to thilke occupacion
Aplyn daily ther mynde and eke herte,
From ther godenesse frele women to perverte. 427

If thou aspie any suspect person
Drawe to thy wife, beware in allè wise;
To hym nor her of thy suspeccion
Breke not one worde though that thin herte agrise;
Kindle no fire and no smoke woll arise:
Although he be of a corrupt entent
She peraventure is not of assent. 434

Explicit.

A SAIYNG OF DAN JOHN.

THER bethe foure thingis that makith man a fole;
Honour first puttith him into outrage,
And aldir next solitarie and fole;
The second is unwelody crokid age;
Women also bring men into dotage;
And mighty wine in many divers wise
Distemprin folke whiche ben yholdin wife. 7

YET OF THE SAME.

THER ben foure thingis causiſg grette folye;
Honour first; and second unwildy age;
Women and wine I dare eke specify
Ymake wise men fallin into dotage;
Wherfore by counseil of philosophers sage
In gret honour lernith this rule of me,
With thine estate havith humilite. 7

MOTTO TO JACKE UPLAND.

OF freris I have told before
Now in a making of a crede,
And yet I could tell worfe and more,
But men would werrien it to rede. 4

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For Chaucer's Prophecie see vol. I. p. 247.

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END OF VOLUME TWELFTH.





